

**THE CHINESE-CANADIAN NEWS PRESSES' COVERAGE
OF CANADA'S RECOGNITION OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE
VANCOUVER CHINESE COMMUNITY, 1968-1972**

by

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Abstract

This research project examines the diverse and competing responses of Vancouver's Chinese community to Canada's diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China in 1970. It investigates the reasons and underlying forces that shaped the position of the proponents and opponents of recognition. Additionally, this project considers how the recognition debate or controversy relates to the historical development of overseas Chinese organizations and nationalism. Vancouver-based Chinatown News and Chinese Times, which represented the opposing stances in the debate, provide the source materials. They are also the subjects because they shaped the local Chinese community's political and cultural discourse. Few studies on recognition include the wider perspective of the Chinese immigrants and their descendents. This project shows that the Canadian-born Chinese turned their stance on recognition into an open challenge against the postwar hegemony of the traditional ethnic associations and the overseas Chinese identity that they perpetuated. This transformation was conflict-ridden.

Reader's Summary

When Canada recognized the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the sole government representing China in October 1970, the Chinese community reacted publicly but not in unison. This research project focuses on the diverse, competing responses of the Chinese community in Vancouver. The project asks the following questions: Who supported recognition of the PRC and who opposed it? What are the reasons and underlying forces that shaped position of the proponents and opponents? The project also examines the effects recognition had on the organizational and identity politics of the Chinese. Additionally, the project considers how the recognition debate or controversy relates to the historical development of overseas Chinese organizations and nationalism. Vancouver-based Chinatown News and Chinese Times provide the source materials for the research project. These two publications are also the subjects of this project because of their role in mobilizing the local Chinese community during the recognition controversy. They were the main ethnic papers that represented the opposing stances in the debate. The two publications also had a role in the shaping of the community's political and cultural discourse in the postwar period.

There are few studies of the reactions of the Chinese residents in Canada to the recognition of the PRC, and they take little account of the wider historical and cultural perspective of the Chinese immigrants and their descendents. This project shows that recognition propelled significant, lasting changes in the politics and culture of the Chinese-Canadian community. At this time, Canadian-born Chinese initiated a takeover of political and cultural authority from the immigrants of an older generation. The younger generation also turned their stance on recognition into an open challenge against the postwar hegemony of the traditional ethnic associations and the overseas Chinese political culture that they perpetuated. This transformation process was ridden with conflicts, as exemplified in the newspaper war and power struggles in Vancouver Chinatown during the formalization of the PRC-Canada ties.

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1. Preface

1.1 Introduction

This research project examines the development of Chinese politics and identity in the Vancouver Chinese community in the postwar period. Specifically, the research project studies discourses on Chinese-ness and political competitions among the community members with reference to politics in China during the 1960s-1970s period. The Chinese, overseas Chinese, or Chinese-Canadian community was mainly located in the Chinatown area in the city of Vancouver. Chinatown was where majority of the Chinese ethnic organizations resided. Since the late 1800s, Chinese immigrants in Canada had maintained complex social, economic, and political networks that connected them with their places of origin. Immigrant or ethnic organizations helped their members keep their homeland ties and adjust their lives in the host country. These organizations were also important in politicizing immigrants, mostly relating to movements and parties in Mainland China. Moreover, overseas Chinese leaders fostered friendly relationships with successive Chinese governments, which encouraged

compatriots abroad to contribute to the modernization of the Chinese nation-state.¹

By engaging in nationalist and later ethnic politics, immigrants and their descendents defined themselves as a collective. However, the process at the same time created organizational and leadership rivalry, and immigrants were divided into factions based on their support for particular Chinese political movements as well as their backgrounds. Canada's recognition of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1970 was an event that re-ignited this fierce factional conflict in Vancouver and other Canadian Chinese communities, after a period relative unity and calm following the Second World War and Chinese Civil War. The opening of Mainland China however was also revolutionary because it created new opportunities for the descendents of immigrants and newcomers in the postwar period to develop new discourses on their Chinese identity and homeland connections, which used to be dominated by the old-timers. Thus, Vancouver Chinese community's response to the improving Canada-PRC ties in 1970 were ultimately a case study in the historical developments of Chinese collective identity and organizational politics in Canada.

¹ For background and general information on Chinese immigrants in Canada and their political and cultural relationship with China see, Edgar Wickberg ed., From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1982). For a comprehensive study on the Vancouver Chinese community in the postwar period and its Old World politics, see Wing Chung Ng, The Chinese in Vancouver, 1945-1980: The Pursuit of Identity and Power (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999). For a detailed look at the various Chinatown organizations in Vancouver and their historical development see Karin Vivian Straaton, "The Political System of the Vancouver Chinese Community: Associations and Leadership in the Early 1960s," MA Thesis, University of British Columbia (1974). The project also consults Jin Tan & Patricia E. Roy, The Chinese in Canada (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association with the support of Government of Canada, 1985). According to Straaton's examination of the Census of Canada, the population of Chinese origin in Vancouver was 30,640. See Straaton, p.48.

The events in Vancouver's Chinatown immediately before and following the Sino-Canadian Communiqué, which occurred in October 1970, showed the local Chinese community's continuing interests in their homeland both politically and culturally. However, the Canadian government and mainstream Canadian society wanted to have a better relationship with Mainland China. Chinese communities across Canada for the most part simply observed Ottawa's negotiation with Beijing. The criticisms or contributions from ethnic organizations and representatives counted little in this diplomatic initiative by the Canadian government. On the other hand, the ethnic organizations and representatives related the Canada-PRC ties with issues concerning Chinese politics and representation of Chinese ethnicity. Both issues were controversial due to the ongoing rivalry between local Nationalist and Communist China supporters and the senior settlers' obsession with an authentic, China-bound culture. Thus, the discussion on the Canada-PRC ties quickly became a part of the debate on homeland and Chinese politics, all of which intensified existing tensions in the Chinese-Canadian communities and created new ones.

Canada's recognition of the PRC furthermore reflected the rapid transformation of the demographic makeup, social institutions, and political culture of the Vancouver Chinese community in the 1970s. The event in a sense was also a catalyst that brought about these changes. The Canadian-born Chinese and immigrants who arrived here in the postwar period used their ethnicity and support for Canada-PRC ties to challenge the status quo within the Chinatown institutions. The leaders of the Chinese-Canadian communities had

once based their legitimacy on their relationship with the Republic of China, which was known as Taiwan or Nationalist China. Now the longtime leaders had to abandon their position along with many other policies that had given them tight control over their respective ethnic organization and communities. Conflicts rather than consensus prevailed as the communities prepared for changes in leadership, home government, and discourses on Chinese identity.²

Nonetheless, analysis of the Chinese-Canadian communities in the critical year of 1970 reflected a few enduring trends. Firstly, while the relationship between Chinese abroad and Chinese state was ambivalent and problematic, successive leaders in the overseas communities had always maintained friendly ties with the home government of the day.³ Thus, many representatives and organizations in the Chinese-Canadian communities switched from one home government residing in Taipei to another one in Beijing at the time of the Sino-Canadian Communiqué. The transition process, however, was very difficult because the overseas communities were not politically cohesive to begin with and there were high stakes involved. Affiliating with the official home government

² Ng, pp. 85-88, 106-116. For another detailed investigation on the impacts of the Canadian recognition of the PRC had on the politics of the Vancouver Chinese community see Hayne Y. Wai, "Vancouver Chinatown 1960-1980: A Community Perspective," New Scholars – New Visions in Canadian Studies 3, no. 1, (Summer 1998): pp. 24-27. Wai asserts that the political conflicts following the recognition were a struggle between the Chinese-Canadian community and KMT, which Wai saw as a foreign organization that subverted the community organizations.

³ Ng and Wickberg's works discuss extensively the relationship between the Chinese government and Chinese in Canada. Straaton's study also offers a detailed examination on the political affiliation of major Chinatown organizations in Vancouver. For additional information on this topic, see Lynn Pann, Sons of Yellow Emperor: A History of the Chinese Diaspora (New York: Kodansha International, 1994). Madeline Hsu has written an article on the efforts of the Chinese government in cultivating ties with the overseas Chinese for socioeconomic and political reasons during the late Qing and early Republic period. See Madeline Y. Hsu, "Migration and Native Place: Qiaokan and the Imagined Community of Taishan County, Guangdong, 1893-1993," Journal of Asian Studies 59, no. 2 (May 2000): pp. 307-331.

or the ruling party gave legitimacy and status for community representatives, who spoke for their constituents and promoted an authentic Chinese culture. Political affiliation also gave the immigrants a sense of belonging and helped them conceptualize the homeland. The degree of political affiliation among the members of the overseas community of course varied depending on individual circumstances. However, the Chinese Nationalist Party had monopolized the political and cultural contacts between the overseas Chinese and their homeland for much of the 1900s. Moreover, its influence over organizational politics in Chinatowns did not decline until the 1970s.⁴ A stubborn refusal to accept the Sino-Canadian Communiqué by the key organizations in the Vancouver Chinatown indicated the entrenchment of the Chinese Nationalist Party and the ROC in the thoughts of the overseas Chinese.

Secondly, political affiliation and Chinese discourses reflected organizational and individual interests ranging from socioeconomic advancements, Chinatown's internal politics, mainstream politics, and cultural pride. Canada-PRC ties in conjunction with the introduction of multiculturalism by the Canadian government in the 1970s had provided an advantageous situation for the Canadian-born (or local/native-born) Chinese. They were able to use their ethnicity and lack of association with Chinese politics to assert themselves as new community leaders or cultural intermediaries. They thus had negotiated a better social position in their ethnic community and in the mainstream. Ideological preferences and organizational loyalty had created infightings in the overseas

⁴ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 221-228, 268-271. Also see Ng, pp. 85-93.

communities as in the case of Canada-PRC ties, but socioeconomic and political realities determined the stances of the ethnic organizations and communities in general – be they pro-Taiwan, pro-Mainland or neither.⁵

In examining the Vancouver Chinese community's reaction to Canada-PRC ties, this research project will discuss the development of two kinds of discourses on China and Chinese identity. The first discourse was nationalistic and focuses on China's difficult path to become a modern nation-state, which would ensure its people and culture be respected worldwide. At the same time, the political and social realities of Mainland China created worries and criticism from the sojourning Chinese. The image of China as a stagnant weakling versus it being a strong great power produced psychological tension and debate in the overseas community during the formalization of Canada-PRC ties.⁶ The second discourse was about a Canadian-bound Chinese identity that celebrated Chinese ethnicity and experiences in Canada, the new homeland. This discourse moreover sought to de-link Chinese politics from Chinese culture. The two discourses on Chinese identity thus were openly challenging each other in the months preceding and following the Sino-Canadian Communiqué.

⁵ Ng and Wickbeg's works again provide comprehensive accounts on how events in China and nationalism were connected to the factional conflicts in the Vancouver Chinese community. The project also consults several other studies on the relationship between the Chinese state and overseas Chinese in the aspects of cultural capital and socioeconomic interests. Though these studies are not specifically on the Chinese community in Canada, they investigate in detail on why emigrants espouse patriotism to their homeland and develop ties with the home government. See Leo Douw, Cen Huang and Michael R. Godley, Qiaoxiang Ties: Interdisciplinary Approaches to 'Cultural Capitalism' in South China (London: Kegan Paul International, 1999).

⁶ The project consults Ng and Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada to analyze the perception of the Vancouver Chinese community towards China.

Overall, the research project investigates Vancouver Chinatown's organizational and community politics that were inextricably linked with political and historical references to China. The project will focus on the community's reactions to the 1970 Sino-Canadian Communiqué as covered by two local Chinese or Chinese-Canadian news publications. This event was important because of its ramifications on Chinatown organizations and on how ethnic Chinese saw themselves, both of which were related. The controversy surrounding Canada-PRC ties had much to do with two different opposing Chinese identities: overseas Chinese and Chinese-Canadian. The former involved the histories and backgrounds of older immigrants, while the latter involved the younger, local-born Chinese residents. The research will trace the creation the two identities, both which were much publicized in the ethnic news publications in 1970.

1.2 A Review of Ethnic News Presses in Vancouver's Chinatown

In general, "ethnic presses" provided new and experienced immigrants a sense of community in the host country and connected them to the home country. They provided information that was relevant to the immigrants, and they narrated current and historical events from their cultural or political perspectives. Ethnic presses were also forums or marketplaces where community members network and interact. Lastly, they could function as a communication channel between the community and mainstream. As the ethnic community grows, this kind of publications varies in terms of content, style, and audience. Some ethnic

newspapers cater to newcomers and devoted their pages to news about home country. Others cater to local-born, acculturated residents and focus on news of the host country. Some ethnic presses were sponsored by large ethnic organizations that wanted to regularly put out public notices on their activities and opinions. There are additionally newspapers that serve as the mouthpieces for ethnic political organizations. On the whole, ethnic news publications are useful in studying the ethnic community's political and cultural discourses. Their editorials and articles, which discuss conflicting interests, worldviews, and reference points, show how the readers and writers negotiate and assert their identities.⁷

This research project concentrate on two locally published ethnic news publications: the Chinese Times and the Chinatown News. The Chinese Times was also known as "Da Han Gong Bao" (大漢公報), which literally means the "Great Han Public Press". It was founded in the late 1907 by the Chinese Freemasons, which is also known as "Zhigongtang" (致公堂), Hong Men Society (洪門會), and "Hong Men Minzhidang" (洪門民治黨). The Chinese Freemasons are considered the oldest Chinese immigrant or ethnic association in Canada and has branches across the country. It started out as a secret society that provided mutual aid and served as a clandestine governing body for the

⁷ For the theoretical aspect of analyzing ethnic news presses in general the project has consulted several works: James P. Danky and Wayne A. Wiegand, ed., Print Culture in a Diverse America (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998); and Arja Pilli, The Finnish-Language Press in Canada, 1901-1939 (Turku, Finland: Institute of Migration, 1982).

immigrants. The association later evolved into a combination of fraternity and semi-political organization that sought to appeal to all overseas Chinese. The Chinese Times editorial disseminated the Chinese Freemasons' politics, which were very nationalistic and patriotic (as the publication name indicated). The association members believed that a strong and united Chinese nation-state is vital to the well-being of its compatriots abroad. They thus devoted their collective resources to the cause of the Chinese Republic, even though they engaged in a bitter rivalry with the local branch of the Chinese Nationalist Party, also known as "Guomindang" or "Kuomintang" (國民黨). In the postwar period, however, the association became more Canadian-oriented and less political in order to maintain its viability. The Chinese Freemasons presently still exist and have a building in Vancouver Chinatown, but the Chinese Times was closed down in the early 1990s. This research paper will later examine the history of the Chinese Freemasons in detail because it had been instrumental in the shaping of the overseas Chinese nationalism and identity. The Chinese Freemasons have no connection to the Freemasons of the European origin. To avoid confusion this paper from now on will use the Chinese name "Hong Men" (or Vancouver Hong Men) in place of Chinese Freemasons.⁸

The Chinatown News was an English-language bi-weekly news magazine for the Canadian-born, acculturated Chinese readers. It was founded in 1953 by

⁸ Ng, pp. 13-15; Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 30-34, 73-77; Tan & Roy, p. 5; and Straaton, pp. 65-72. For an in-depth examination on the Hong Men Society in Canada and the Chinese Times see Wickberg, ed. From China to Canada and Straaton's thesis on Chinatown organizations.

Roy Mah, who belonged to first generation of local-born Chinese, was also a journalist, World War II veteran, and union organizer.⁹ The magazine reported local news and news from Chinatowns in North America and Hawaii. Its coverage furthermore paid more attention to activities and organizations of the native-born, who were seldom covered by local Chinese-language newspapers and mainstream medias. Karin Straaton's study of the Vancouver Chinatown notes that the magazine slanted towards the local-born Chinese by presenting many of them as the leaders or leading voices of the community.¹⁰ Wing Chung Ng's analysis of local Chinese media also finds that in cases of disputes between native-born and immigrants, the Chinatown News tended to side with the former group. The magazine at times complained that the younger and local-born elements were discriminated against in the ethnic community that perceived them as too Westernized and unwilling to help out their fellow compatriots. Chinese politics, however, was a topic that the Chinatown News was reluctant to deal with until Canada started to negotiate with the PRC.¹¹ The magazine's basic editorial position was that immigrants should abandon their "cultural arrogance" and political baggage from the home country. Only then the local-born group could help the immigrants to become fully integrated Canadian citizens. Indeed, the content and style of the magazine were geared towards the ideas of integration and acculturation. Whereas the Chinese Times represented the

⁹ For some biographical information on Roy Mah see Ng, pp. 49, 153. For a general analysis on the Chinatown News see Ng, pp. 48-51. Other sections in Ng's book also provide a more in-depth look at the magazine's cultural and political agenda as well as its defense of the native-born group, for instance see pp. 54-59.

¹⁰ Straaton, pp. 110-111

¹¹ Ng, p. 107.

voices of immigrants, the Chinatown News represented the voices of native-born.¹²

Both publications ceased to exist by the 1990s, and there has always been a wide range of ethnic news literatures catering to different needs and viewpoints in the local Chinese community. Nonetheless, the Chinatown News and Chinese Times are important sources. Though there is little information on circulation and readership for these two presses, they were the major ones based in Vancouver and available in academic and public archives.¹³ Thus, their articles and editorials, which revealed much about Chinatown politics and identity discourses, are the main source materials for this research project. Before the coming of international Chinese-language news medias such as Sing Tao, the Vancouver overseas community had local ethnic presses that competed aggressively against one and other. The relatively recognized ones in the postwar period included the Chinese Voice (僑聲報), which targeted new immigrants, and the New Republic (新民國報), which was the press for Chinese

¹² For a general analysis on the Chinatown News see Ng, 48-51. Other sections in Ng's book also provide a more thorough look at the magazine's cultural and political agenda as well as its defense of the native-born group, for instance see pp. 51-59.

¹³ The Vancouver Public Library (downtown branch) has the complete volume set of the Chinatown News, while the Asian Library at the University of British Columbia has the Chinese Times in its archive and is available upon request. Ng asserts that the Chinese Times is the leading Chinese-language newspaper in Vancouver with local circulation from about 2,000 to 3,000 copies in the postwar period. See Ng, p. 148. In January 1974, the Chinatown News carried by the Canadian Press on the Chinese newspaper. The article estimated that the circulation of all Chinese papers combined was 12,500. The Chinese Voice had the largest circulation with 5,000 readers. The Chinatown News had about 4,000 readers nationwide. Taking account of Canada's 150,000 residents of Chinese origin (56,000 in Vancouver according to the Chinatown News's article), the circulation of Chinese papers were small. The Chinese-language newspapers were mainly read by old immigrants, while the acculturated Canadian-born Chinese residents read mostly mainstream English-language papers. See Chinatown News, 18 January 1974, p. 14.

Nationalists.¹⁴ The Da Zhong Bao (大眾報), which translates to “The Masses,” was a radical press of the Chinese Youth Association. The Da Zhong Bao catered to the left-leaning Chinese-Canadian activists and supporters of Communist China.¹⁵ When Canada was preparing to recognize the PRC, the Da Zhong Bao engaged in a newspaper war against other Chinese presses that were either traditionally pro-Nationalist or non-partisan.

1.3 Literature Review and Methodology

This research project intends to move away from analyzing the place and image of the Chinese immigrant or ethnic group in the Canadian society. The project instead will discuss how different generations of immigrant and local-born Chinese in Canada construct their ethnic or national identities. The construction process is linked to the internal politics of the overseas community (and organizations) as well as to the politics of Chinese nationalism. Hence, the main purpose is to find out what did it mean to be Chinese in Canada and how did one particular Chinese-Canadian community relate to the home country through ethnic presses. The project also examines the ways that editorials and stories from Chinatown News and Chinese Times influenced the local Chinese community on issues such as Canada’s recognition of the PRC and social conditions in the Mainland.

¹⁴ For information on the Chinese Voice, its content and editorial viewpoint see Ng, pp. 30, 36, 61-62, 148, 151. For information on the New Republic see Ng, pp. 37-38, 85-86.

¹⁵ For information on the Da Zhong Bao see Wickberg ed., From China to Canada, pp. 235, 258-259; and Ng, pp. 37, 156.

The methodology of this project is influenced by Benedict Anderson theory on how people identify themselves to an imagined national community, which involved shared experiences, mythical pasts, and common aspirations.¹⁶ Wing Chung Ng, Edgar Wickberg, and Wang Gungwu's studies on Chinese migrations have useful analyses on interests and imaginations that shaped the Chinese identities abroad. These authors provide several themes that this project considers when analyzing ethnic presses' coverage on the Canada-PRC ties. These themes include the morals of the sojourning Chinese, founding of the Chinese Republic, and rituals and origins of early ethnic organizations. Ng's study also takes account of international politics, local struggles of the Chinese-Canadians and Canada's policies on ethnic minorities and culture.

Overall, there are a variety of factors that affected identity discourses. In this case, the project mainly looks at the role of ethnic presses, old world politics, and Canada-PRC ties as a catalyst event. This research project additionally has consulted several other secondary sources on Chinese nationalism and overseas Chinese communities, such as Lynn Pan's Sons of Yellow Emperor and Sun Wanning's Leaving China.¹⁷ Sun in particular studies the effects of emigration and globalization on Chinese society and culture. Though her focus is on immigrants from Mainland China since the 1980s, Sun offers applicable and interesting insights, such as the creation of a transnational Chinese community

¹⁶ For Anderson's theory on nationalism, see Benedict Anderson, Imagined Community: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Revised Edition (New York: Verso, 1991).

¹⁷ Sun Wanning, Leaving China: Media, Migration, and Transnational Imagination (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Ltd., 2002). Lynn Pan and Madeline Hsu also offer general accounts on the development of the modern Chinese nationalism from the perspective of the overseas Chinese. The project additionally consults Wang Gungwu, The Chinese Overseas: From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

by ethnic medias and cultural products. Her analysis also touches on modernization, immigrant experiences, and nationalism.¹⁸ Other important academic works that the research project has consulted include Timothy Stanley's study of the political activities of the Guangdong merchants in British Columbia at the turn of the 20th century and Jonathan Unger's anthology on modern Chinese nationalism.¹⁹ Lastly, Paul Evans and B. Frolic's anthology, Reluctant Adversaries, provides useful background information on the recognition from the Canadian policymakers' perspective. The anthology moreover contains a piece by Janet Lum on Chinese-Canadians' reactions to the recognition.²⁰

¹⁸ Sun, pp. 4-9, 213-216.

¹⁹ Timothy J. Stanley, " 'Chinamen, Wherever We Go': Chinese Nationalism and Guangdong Merchants in British Columbia, 1871-1911," The Canadian Historical Review 77, no. 4 (December 1996): pp. 475-503. Also see Jonathan Unger, ed., Chinese Nationalism (New York: ME Sharpe, 1996).

²⁰ Janet Lum, "Recognition and the Toronto Chinese Community," in Reluctant Adversaries: Canada and the People's Republic of China, 1949-1970, eds. Paul M. Evans and B. Michael Frolics (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 217-240.

2. Background to the Canadian Recognition of the PRC

2.1 The Origin of the Sino-Canadian Communiqué

From the end of the World War II to 1949, the Chinese Communists and Nationalists continued the civil war that had been interrupted by Japanese invasion in the late 1930s. The Communists under the leadership of Mao Zedong were ultimately victorious and drove the Nationalists led by Chiang Kai-Shek out of the Mainland China and into the island of Taiwan. Both the Communists and Nationalists in their respective territories established authoritarian, one-party governments. The Communists proclaimed their new nation-state on the Chinese mainland the People's Republic of China while the Guomindang retained the Republic of China as the official name for Taiwan. Moreover, both regimes claimed to be the sole, legitimate government for China.

The Cold War and relations with the United States affected Canada's relations with China from the early 1950s to late 1960s. The American government supported and recognized the Nationalist government in Taiwan after the civil war in China. The 1950-1953 Korean War and conflict in Vietnam during the 1960s entrenched the American position, which Canada followed. The ROC had the only Chinese representative in the United Nations (UN), and the US firmly opposed any proposal by other UN members to admit the PRC in place

of the ROC.²¹ The countries belonging to the Communist bloc supported the entry of the PRC into the UN. Some major Western European countries also wanted to have diplomatic ties with the PRC. Britain recognized the Chinese Communist regime immediately after the civil war. France too proceeded to establish ties with the Mainland in 1964 against the wishes of the US government and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and it simultaneously broke off diplomatic relations with Taiwan.²² Though many UN members supported the PRC's entry into the international community, the American pressure made sure such initiatives never went beyond debates in the UN General Assembly.

Canada followed the US with regard to China because Canada had to consider its unique political and economic partnership with the US. America also had to maintain its credibility as the leader of Western democracies during the Cold War. Besides these reasons, the Canadian government had to take account of the public's reactions to the prospect of making deals with a communist country during the Cold War.²³ Nonetheless, Canada had informal trade and diplomatic ties with the PRC, and since the 1950s Canadian politicians and diplomats tried to break the impasse in the UN over the China question. For example, Prime Minister Lester Pearson and Department of External Affairs

²¹ Don Page, "The Representation of China in the United Nations: Canadian Perspectives and Initiatives, 1949-1971," in Reluctant Adversaries: Canada and the People's Republic of China, 1949-1970, eds. Paul M. Evans and B. Michael Frolics (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 73-84.

²² Stephen Beecroft, "Canadian Policy towards China, 1949-1957: The Recognition Problem," in Reluctant Adversaries: Canada and the People's Republic of China, 1949-1970, eds. Paul M. Evans and B. Michael Frolics (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 43-45. Also see Page, pp. 89-90.

²³ Beecroft, "Canada's Policy, 1949-1957," pp. 62-65. Also see Norman St Amour, "Sino-Canadian Relations, 1963-1968: The American Factor," in Reluctant Adversaries: Canada and the People's Republic of China, 1949-1970, eds. Paul M. Evans and B. Michael Frolics (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 106-123.

Minister (DEA) Paul Martin planned to recognize the PRC and ROC together in the mid 1960s.²⁴ However, their effort was unsuccessful because neither the Nationalists nor Communists wanted a formal, territorial division of Taiwan and the Mainland. The Americans also opposed this move as they became more involved in the political and military affairs in Southeast Asia. Consequently, the UN assembly in the mid-1960s failed to pass a resolution that would admit the PRC through a majority vote in the assembly.²⁵

Pierre Trudeau, who succeeded Pearson as the Prime Minister in 1968, radically changed Canada's position on international affairs and declared that his government would recognize the PRC and sponsor its entry into the UN. However, Ottawa in this instance chose to engage in a bilateral negotiation with Beijing instead of reintroducing the recognition initiative in the UN.²⁶ For Prime Minister Trudeau, recognizing Communist China was a realistic policy. Moreover, recognition was a dramatic example of Canada's independence from the USA as well as being active in international affairs. There was also a personal aspect to Trudeau's decision. He had visited China twice, in 1949 and in 1960. His experiences there made him sympathetic towards the Chinese Communists, and since the visits he became an advocate for the PRC. Trudeau expressed his opinion on this issue in the editorials of Cité Libre. He also co-authored a book

²⁴ B. Michael Frolic, "The Trudeau Initiative," in Reluctant Adversaries: Canada and the People's Republic of China, 1949-1970, eds. Paul M. Evans and B. Michael Frolics (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 192-198. Also see Page, "China in the United Nations," pp. 85-98.

²⁵ Page, pp. 85-98. Also see St Armour, pp. 106-123.

²⁶ Page, pp. 98-100.

with Jacques Herbert titled Two Innocents in Red China (1960). Lastly, Trudeau wanted to be a historical figure who brought China out of its isolation.²⁷

The bilateral negotiation took place in Stockholm from February 1969 to October 1970, when the Sino-Canadian Communiqué was formulated. In the beginning of the negotiation, Trudeau and his DEA Minister, Mitchell Sharp, wanted to recognize the Communist government as the undisputed government of Mainland China while still considering that Taiwan under the Nationalists was a separate territorial and political entity. As the negotiation progressed, however, the Chinese diplomats pressed for the PRC's "inalienable claim" to the Taiwan island and for Canada to sever its ties with the "Chiang Kai-shek gang". Canada in the end conceded to the Chinese and the communiqué was signed on 13 October 1970.²⁸ The Canadian government and public believed the communiqué stood for a special relationship with China. The negotiation process furthermore became the model for other countries that wanted to establish ties with the PRC. A year after the Sino-Canadian Communiqué, the UN admitted the PRC in place of the ROC. By now, the US too sought to normalize its relations with Mainland China, which was now regarded internationally as a major power with much political and economic potential.²⁹

²⁷ Frolic, pp. 189-192, 210-213. Beecroft notes that the Canadian images of China were also influenced by the missionary societies that were active in that country. While the missionary societies did not overtly support the Chinese Communists, they documented and publicized the appalling conditions of life and human rights record in Mainland China under the rule of the Chinese Nationalist Party before 1949. Beecroft asserts that missionaries "played an important role in preparing the Canadian public opinion for an eventual change in China policy." See Beecroft, pp. 46-47.

²⁸ Frolic, pp. 198-210.

²⁹ Page, pp. 98-100.

2.2 Politics in Canada's Chinese Community and the Nationalist-Communist Rivalry

For the Canadian public in general, recognizing the PRC was not an electoral issue.³⁰ For Canada's Chinese communities, however, this policy was very controversial to say the least. Though reactions in the Chinese communities were difficult to generalize, most ethnic organizations had been firmly against recognition. Janet Lum's study indicates that major Chinatown organizations supported the Nationalist government and at times lobbied on its behalf. The Chinese Benevolent Associations (CBAs), which were the general, umbrella organizations formed by various ethnic/immigrant associations, had launched a coordinated public relations campaign to stop the talk between Ottawa and Beijing. Lum observes that the lobbying process involved cultivating personal ties with Canadian politicians. There were banquets and photo-ops for politicians in exchange for their rhetorical support for the ROC. The most noteworthy of these events was Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's attendance of a nine-course luncheon held by the Toronto Chinese Community Center in 1962. During the luncheon, Diefenbaker grasped a copy of the pro-Nationalist Shing Wah newspaper and stated he agreed with its political stance.³¹ The events additionally implied that local Chinese elites could mobilize votes for politicians in return for policies (i.e. on immigration, on relations with China) that were agreeable to them and communities they represented.³²

³⁰ Frolic, p. 212.

³¹ Lum, pp. 218-219.

³² Lum, p. 219.

The Nationalist supporters also organized protests against economic and cultural exchanges between the PRC and Canada, such as their demonstration against the Peking Opera Tour in 1960. The more extreme Nationalist supporters even denounced the sympathizers of the PRC as communist spies, and they encouraged the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and politicians to investigate subversive activities in their communities. There was a general fear in the Chinese communities that even slight sympathy towards the PRC could tarnish the collective image of the Chinese residents and arouse suspicions from the local police.³³ Moreover, pro-Nationalist and conservative ethnic presses such as Toronto's Shing Wah Daily and Vancouver's New Republic sought to present a consensus among the Chinese residents on the matters of homeland politics. They were also aggressively propagandizing against those who held different views on the PRC and its recognition.

Trudeau's new China policy therefore had quickly encountered an organized resistance from the long-established Chinese-Canadian institutions, many of which affiliated with the Nationalist Party. Claiming to represent their respective communities, the CBAs across Canada formed a makeshift national lobby called the Chinese Community Center of Canada (CCC of Canada) in 1968. The anti-recognition movement changed its strategy from lobbying politicians to stirring up protests and writing petitions. The opponents of Canada-PRC ties also attended public hearings held by the government on this subject. In these petitions and meetings, the CCC of Canada warned Ottawa of the possible

³³ Chinatown News, 3 November 1970, pp. 24-25.

communist subversion of the Chinese-Canadian communities. The opponents of recognition also stated that the Chinese Communist Party was authoritarian, so the PRC should not be recognized until it had popular approval from the Chinese people in Mainland China and around the world. Additionally, some Nationalist supporters believed that widespread unrest in China caused by the Cultural Revolution in the mid-1960s could provide an opportunity for Chiang Kai-shek to retake the lost territories.³⁴ In April 1968, Vancouver's Chinatown News reported that the benevolent association delegates censored Trudeau "in the name of Chinese people across Canada". They further asserted that Trudeau was making "a tragic mistake" by following in Britain's footsteps in establishing ties with the PRC because this kind of maneuver so far had not create world peace and stability.³⁵ A month after recognition, the Nationalist faction in Toronto called Ottawa's decision "a drastic error that will draw the wrath and indignation of Chinese communities across the country".³⁶

Despite the coordinated opposition, the Trudeau government proceeded with the Stockholm negotiation. The anti-recognition movement later was losing support the Chinese communities, which became divided over the recognition of the PRC in relation to the Nationalist-Communist conflict. In Toronto, two major clan associations and the local Hong Men organization opposed the position of the benevolent association. Other Chinese presses not affiliated with the Nationalist Party also criticized the CCC of Canada. Once Ottawa had

³⁴ Lum, pp. 218-223.

³⁵ Chinatown News, 18 April 1968, p. 20.

³⁶ Chinatown News, 3 November 1970, p. 23.

announced its intention to establish ties with the PRC, the silent supporters of the Chinese Communists became vocal. Lum's study additionally points to a "mood of quiet sympathy" for the PRC that became prevalent in the Toronto Chinese community during the negotiation and contributed to the exhaustion of the anti-recognition movement.³⁷

In the Vancouver Chinese community, the responses to Trudeau's China policy were contentious. Contemporary mainstream and Chinese medias indicated that the majority in the community fell neither to the extreme Nationalist or Communist camps. Some partisans on homeland politics used Canada-PRC ties to vocally express (or impose) their opinions, but mainstream Canadian and Chinese-Canadian medias generally dismissed them. For most Chinese residents in Vancouver, the main issues were history and the role and representation of the Chinese people in Canada rather than preference for any particular regime in home country. The political competition among the ethnic groups and organizations further complicated the debate. Overall, the Vancouver Chinese community's mood during the recognition controversy was contradictory and ambiguous. Ethnic pride and popular Chinese nationalism of various kinds and in various degrees prevented a consensus on Canada-PRC ties.

The different positions of the Chinese immigrant and ethnic organizations are connected to Chinatown's political structure, organizations' political connections and their members' backgrounds. Firstly, this project has to provide an account of Kuomintang's activities in Canada (and in Vancouver). The

³⁷ Lum, p. 233.

Kuomintang, or KMT in short, was created in 1912 when the Republic of China was founded after the collapse of the Qing Dynasty. The leadership of the KMT was composed of nationalist revolutionaries who brought about the end of the Manchu monarchy. Before the collapse of the Qing, the local authorities in China tried to suppress the KMT, and consequently the party relied on the support of the overseas Chinese around the world. In Canada, the prototype of the KMT known as the Revolutionary Alliance or “Tung-meng Hui” (同盟會) was formed in British Columbia in 1910. A local branch of the KMT, called the Chinese Nationalist League, was formally established in Vancouver after the founding of the Republic.³⁸

Party headquarters, newspapers and schools soon sprang up across Canada as the Nationalist Party became the de facto ruling party in the Republic. However, China in the years from 1911 to 1927 was in an anarchic state, suffering from regional warlords and colonial powers. Hence, the KMT, while having influence over the overseas communities, could do little for them in areas like negotiating immigration policy with the host countries. When the Chinese Consul could not prevent the Canadian government from implementing a ban on Chinese immigration in 1923, the Chinese Times commented that China being a weak country had no foreign policy and could only rely on international goodwill.³⁹

³⁸ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 73-77, 101-106.

³⁹ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, p. 142.

The KMT in the early 1900s also began to systematically infiltrate the local ethnic organizations. In the case of Vancouver, the KMT was friendly with the surname and district associations. The KMT furthermore helped the leaders of these organizations to become representatives in the Vancouver CBA, which was a community-wide association established in 1889. From 1912 onwards, the executive board of the CBA was controlled by the KMT cadres and district association representatives.⁴⁰ Con and Wickberg's study attributes the KMT's early success to its ability to rally the diverse elements and interests in the community that the merchant and clan associations could not represent by themselves.⁴¹ Patriotism in reaction to events in China and the growth of the Chinese immigrant communities (before the 1923 Exclusion Act) were also the factors behind the growth of KMT and other associations.⁴² Additionally, the KMT in its early years saw Canada's Chinese communities as a vital source of support and assigned skilful cadres from other countries to expand its Canadian operation. The KMT also made Vancouver its main headquarters in Canada.⁴³ Many of the party officials in local KMT branch initially were from southern China, where most of the early Chinese immigrants in Canada came from.⁴⁴

By the 1950s, the KMT was the most influential Chinese organization in Canada. It was still in control of Chinatown politics even after the Chinese

⁴⁰ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, p. 108. Straaton has a short history on the Vancouver CBA. It also had an earlier predecessor called the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, which was established in Victoria in 1884. See Straaton, pp. 91-94.

⁴¹ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, p. 108.

⁴² Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 112-115.

⁴³ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 109-110.

⁴⁴ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 161-162

Communists established the People's Republic and drove the Nationalists to Taiwan. Besides the fact that the leaders of the traditional ethnic organizations were affiliated with the party, one of the three co-chairmen in the CBA had to be from the party. The Hong Men organization was given the second co-chair and another "neutral" organization the third one in order to uphold the façade that the CBA represented the entire community. The neutral organization, which acted as a balancer between the rivaling Hong Men and KMT, was usually a major district organization like the Toi-san Association. Other non-traditional organizations that formed in the postwar period, such as the Chinese Veterans Association, Elks and Lions Club were not represented in the CBA.⁴⁵ Con and Wickberg's study notes that though most Chinese "saw the [CBA's] factional quality," the mainstream Canadian society saw it as the community spokesperson.⁴⁶ The CBA actually became subordinate to the interests of the KMT, which claimed to "guide" the overseas Chinese communities.⁴⁷ Though the Hong Men and a few traditional associations were on less than friendly terms with the KMT, their leaders remained loyal to their home state, the Republic of China. Hence, the political and cultural discourses in the CBA and community were relatively homogenous.

Furthermore, Chinese consulates represented the KMT government since 1928, when the KMT eliminated most warlords in China and established a central

⁴⁵ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 222-223. Also see Straaton, p. 94.

⁴⁶ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 222-223.

⁴⁷ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 227-228.

government in Nanking.⁴⁸ Vancouver was the KMT's center of operation in Canada, and the city had a consul-general residence in the Shaughnessy area, which was an "exclusive neighborhood".⁴⁹ The KMT government in the 1930s and 1940s also established an Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission and granted overseas representations for the Chinese National Assembly (with two seats for the Canadian Chinese). The Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission in particular conducted censuses on overseas communities, provided educational materials for Chinese schools, and cultivate political-economic ties with Chinatown organizations.⁵⁰ As result, the KMT had a grip on much of the leadership in Canada's Chinese communities until the 1970s. Local Chinese leaders obtained socioeconomic advancement in and outside of their ethnic community by working with the KMT government.

Similar to its counterpart in China, the KMT in Canada was internally divided due to clashing leaders and ideologies (especially pertaining to the "right" versus "left" elements within the party).⁵¹ However, the KMT remained intact and popular for many decades. The KMT had built an image of being modern and nationalistic,⁵² and this image resonated in the overseas communities. In the 1930s and 1940s, the Chinese government had called upon the overseas Chinese to help their home country in its war against Japan. The Japanese government's colonial ambition in China had been well known and its full scale

⁴⁸ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 161-162.

⁴⁹ Ng, p. 87.

⁵⁰ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 161-162.

⁵¹ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 159-163.

⁵² Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, p. 159.

invasion of China in 1937 had provoked widespread indignation and patriotic response from the Chinese people. In Canada, the KMT organized and coordinated fundraising events for refugee relief and military aid. Its “National Salvation” campaigns in the Sino-Japanese War (which became a part of World War II) had created not only a temporary unity but also a lasting impression in the Chinese-Canadian communities. The KMT furthermore capitalized on the patriotic fervor that continued after wartime. Its prestige increased inside and outside of the Chinese community, and its authority was almost unchallenged well into the postwar period.⁵³

Janet Lum’s study in particular points to a visit to the Canadian House of Commons made by Madame Chiang Soong Mai-ling, the wife of Chiang Kai-Shek, in 1943. In the parliament, Madame Chiang stated that the Chinese people expected to be treated “as equals, not as inferiors”. Following her statement, the KMT gave the initial funds for a committee that aimed to repeal the 1923 Exclusion Act.⁵⁴ After the Second World War and the repeal of the Exclusion Act in 1947, the KMT continued to be involved in the affairs of the Chinese communities in Canada. It exerted its power mainly through community-wide organizations such as the benevolent associations. For example, it aided the struggle to remove the additional restriction on Asian family immigration, which was lifted in 1956. The KMT affiliates also protested against the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) for its intrusive investigation on illegal immigration from

⁵³ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 188-198.

⁵⁴ Lum, p. 227.

Hong Kong in 1959.⁵⁵ Overall, the KMT government in Taiwan and the local KMT branches in Canada had cultivated a reciprocal relationship with the Chinese communities. The KMT became legitimate in the eyes of the overseas Chinese by protecting their interests and speaking for them. It furthermore interlocked itself with the benevolent associations. The Nationalist faction in Vancouver Chinatown began to lose their effectiveness and enthusiasm in local affairs in the 1960s.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, most longtime, first generation settlers (or old-timers) were accustomed to the status quo.

Before 1949, most overseas Chinese therefore considered the KMT the best hope for their homeland and afterwards the lesser evil in comparison to the Chinese Communists. Moreover, the KMT government was the only viable representation for the Chinese people in face of foreign governments and businesses.⁵⁷ After the civil war, Taiwan offered a legitimate channel for the overseas Chinese to maintain political and cultural contacts with their homeland. Taiwan in a sense also became a new native place for Chinese immigrants as well as a model for the modern Chinese society. However, Wing Chung Ng's study finds that Hong Kong became the more popular "surrogate native place" for Canada's Chinese communities. The old-timers and newcomers in the postwar

⁵⁵ Lum, pp. 226-230. When the RCMP raided Chinese-Canadian communities, an executive of both the KMT and the community-wide association in Toronto made a protest trip to Prime Minister John Diefenbaker. The executive, William C. Wong, argued that the Chinese-Canadians had their civil rights violated and image tarnished. When Wong returned, he spoke to an audience in Toronto, and on the stage were the ROC flag, the Canadian ensign, and a picture of Sun Yat-sen. The Toronto's Shing Wah newspaper, which was pro-Nationalist, also linked immigration restriction with the possible recognition of the PRC, both of which the Toronto Chinese community were allegedly very concerned about. The Vancouver CBA however was implicated in helping the RCMP to crackdown on illegal immigrants. Ng finds that this affair damaged the CBA's prestige. See Ng, p. 77.

⁵⁶ Ng, pp. 97-102. Also see Wai, pp. 24-27.

⁵⁷ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, p. 159.

era identified with Hong Kong due to its proximity to Guangdong province, its colonial background, and its transient (or emigrant) population.⁵⁸ Though there were various kinds of Chinese culture and native place for the individuals and groups to choose, the KMT visibly dominated Chinatowns' political and cultural discourses. This trend continued well into the 1960s and early 1970s.

The anti-recognition activities in Vancouver thus showed the peak of the strength of the Nationalist faction before its decline. Janet Lum's study contends that Toronto was the center of the recognition controversy, but the situation in Vancouver was very contentious as well.⁵⁹ As early as April 1968, when Trudeau had just become the Liberal Party leader and Prime Minister, the Chinatown News reported about a protest against the proposed recognition of the PRC by some community members.⁶⁰ The Vancouver CBA, which was a part of the CCC of Canada, obviously backed the KMT government in Taiwan and opposed the recognition of the PRC. Even before 1968, the Nationalist faction in Vancouver Chinatown had worked tirelessly to encourage local support for the ROC and to suppress support for the PRC. The Nationalist supporters were aware that as the KMT government's promise to re-unite China became increasingly hollow, they were also losing their prestige and legitimacy in their ethnic community.⁶¹ In 1953, the KMT founded the Anti-Communist National Salvation Association that was modeled after the patriotic campaigns in the wartime, though its activities were directed against internal foes rather than foreign invaders. The CBA and most of

⁵⁸ Ng, pp. 88-93.

⁵⁹ Lum, p. 217.

⁶⁰ Chinatown News, 18 April 1968, pp. 3, 46.

⁶¹ Ng, pp. 85-86

the district and clan associations joined the Anti-Communist National Salvation Association, creating the appearance of unity in China and popular, non-partisan support for Taiwan.⁶²

The KMT and CBA also regularly attended or hosted public functions to foster ties between party officials and organizational leaders. In these functions, the KMT supporters praised the local Nationalist supporters and condemned the PRC government and its “spies” in Vancouver. The KMT also encouraged the old-timers and newcomers, particularly refugees from the Mainland, to speak out against the Chinese Communists.⁶³ As mentioned before, the KMT and its press, the New Republic, only covered news favorable to the local Nationalist faction and Taiwan. However, its propaganda became ineffective as time progressed. Other steadfast supporters of the KMT government were the few immigrants and students from Taiwan. The Taiwanese students for instance formed the Free China Federation in 1971, sometime after Canada’s recognition of the PRC.⁶⁴

Ng’s examination of the local Nationalist-Communist rivalry provided several reasons why the leaders of the Chinatown organizations supported the KMT. Firstly, they and their close followers had participated in the National Salvation campaigns in the 1930s and 1940s. They for a long time equated patriotism with backing the KMT and the ROC. Secondly, the KMT attracted adherents with some privileges and socioeconomic benefits. Ng points out that the traditional associations had engaged in heated competition to get their people

⁶² Ng, pp. 85-86

⁶³ Ng, p. 86.

⁶⁴ Chinatown News, 3 April 1971, p. 57.

into the ROC overseas delegations. Local leaders enhanced their status and authority in the overseas community by becoming representatives for the Chinese government. Ng moreover contended that joining the KMT and its campaigns to save China gave a sense of self-worth to those who experienced discrimination and powerlessness in Canada.⁶⁵ On the whole, the aggressive policies of the KMT government in co-opting overseas Chinese elites and their social networks helped form the vocal anti-recognition force in the 1970s. The older and established immigrants were loyal to the ROC due to their wartime activities and to the fact that the Republican regime had been the legitimate government in the Mainland for almost four decades.

The relatively independent elements in the CBA and traditional ethnic organizations also expressed concerns about Canada's recognition of the PRC because they wanted stability in their community. Wong Foon Sien, who was the former president of the CBA, expressed "grave reservations" to the Sino-Canadian Communiqué when being interviewed by the Chinatown News in October 1970.⁶⁶ Before his death in 1971, Wong appeared to spend a lot of effort in repairing the rifts in the CBA and community that were caused by the recognition.⁶⁷ Wong was a prominent community leader who had been dubbed the "unofficial mayor" of Chinatown. He was not part of the KMT but belonged to the neutral Toi-san Association. Wong was prominent inside and outside of the Vancouver Chinese community because of his role in the campaigns for the

⁶⁵ Ng, pp. 85-86.

⁶⁶ Chinatown News, 18 October 1970, p. 9.

⁶⁷ Chinatown News, 3 July 1971, p. 41.

enfranchisement of Chinese residents and for ending the discriminating immigration policy targeting “Orientals”. He was also active in mainstream Canadian politics and was a member in the Federal Liberal Party and Vancouver Civic Association. Wong preferred the Chinatown organizations to focus on protecting the rights and interests of Chinese in Canada.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, he never publicly opposed the CBA’s involvement in homeland politics, and his view on China was not much different from most Chinese immigrants of the older generation. His reign as the president of the CBA lasted from 1948 to 1959, when the KMT was at the height of its power in the local Chinese community.⁶⁹

The Canadian-born or local-born Chinese, many of whom were descendents of the immigrants who came to Canada in the early 1900s (before 1923), were ambivalent about Canada’s recognition of the PRC. To discuss their position on Chinese politics and identity, one first has to address the backgrounds of the Canadian-born group and their organizations. The politically active segment of the Canadian-born population in the postwar period was mainly from the first generation of the local-born, but in the 1970s the second generation of the local-born also emerged as a recognizable political force in the Vancouver Chinese community. Generally, the local-born group was acculturated and integrated into the mainstream Canadian society. They received benefits and opportunities that were denied to their parents or grandparents due to

⁶⁸ For a short biography of Wong Foon Sien see Straaton, pp. 137-139. Also see Chinatown News, 3 August 1971, pp. 34-36.

⁶⁹ Hayne Wai in his study on the postwar Vancouver Chinatown suggests that Wong Foon Sien did oppose the CBA’s association with the KMT and was later ousted rather than retired from his position as the head of the organization. See Wai, pp. 24-27.

discrimination and poverty. Consequently, the elites in the local-born group were often professionals, academics, and business people. In addition, Straaton's study finds that the local-born group, who was bilingual, acculturated and socially mobile, tended to live outside of Chinatown in order to escape ethnic stereotypes.⁷⁰ The Canadian-born population grew steadily in the postwar period, and by the 1970s close to half of the Vancouver Chinese community was native according to Ng's research based on the Census of Canada. The demographical situation for the entire Canada's population was similar. The Canadian-born Chinese often referred themselves as being indigenous, or "*tusheng*" (土生) in Chinese. The research project will use these terms interchangeably.⁷¹

The socioeconomic contacts of the native-born group went beyond the limits of cultural and ethnic networks. Furthermore, the politically and socially active native-born individuals were marginalized and discriminated in their ethnic community. They at times faced prejudice from their elders and new immigrants, who saw the Canadian-born as being too assimilated in Canadian (or Western) culture.⁷² Hence, the Canadian-born established their own organizations to serve their interests and enhance their status inside and outside of their ethnic community. Some of the major Canadian-born Chinese organizations in Vancouver included the Chinese Veteran Association, Chinatown Lions Club, and Elks Club. The Lions Club was made up of business people while the Elk

⁷⁰ For a short summary on the local-born Chinese see Straaton, pp. 43-44.

⁷¹ Ng, pp. 42-43. Note that Wickberg and Ng's definition of the *tusheng* include indeterminate number of Chinese who came at an early age before 1923.

⁷² Ng, pp. 40-42.

Club was made up of those in white-collar professions.⁷³ The Chinese Veteran Association in particular made up of the first generation of local-born who served in the Canadian military in World War II. The Chinatown News editor Roy Mah and the first Chinese-Canadian parliamentarian Douglas Jung were veterans and famous examples of Canadian-born Chinese leaders. Mah and Jung's wartime service and their subsequent struggles to obtain legal and political rights for all Chinese in Canada gave them distinction in the mainstream Canadian society. However, they also used their veteran status to assert their claim as heroic leaders of their local ethnic community.⁷⁴

Some Canadian-born Chinese joined the traditional ethnic organizations such as the CBA and Hong Men. Harry Con, for instance, was a native-born and a veteran who served as the spokesperson for the Vancouver branch of the Hong Men organization.⁷⁵ The native-born elements strengthened these established Chinatown institutions. However, they also demanded reforms of the structure and purpose of the traditional associations, much to the ire of the old-timers and conservatives.⁷⁶ Continuing support for Taiwan and lack of attention towards local affairs were issues dividing these large institutions on a local and national level since Canada's recognition of the PRC.

Generally, the *tusheng* group along with most young new immigrants was detached from homeland politics. They discuss their ancestral country mainly in

⁷³ Ng, pp. 45-47.

⁷⁴ For more information on the Chinese-Canadian World War II veterans see Ng, pp. 43-45. For information on Douglas Jung and the entry of ethnic Chinese in mainstream Canadian politics in postwar period, see Ng, pp. 93-96.

⁷⁵ For backgrounds on Harry Con see Ng, pp. 101-102.

⁷⁶ Ng, pp. 51-54.

cultural and sentimental terms. The native-born Chinese however also early separated themselves from the immigrants culturally.⁷⁷ Before Canada's recognition of the PRC, the Chinatown News rarely reported or editorialized about China or Taiwan. When the news magazine had to address the matter of the Canada-PRC ties and the Mainland-Taiwan divide, it contended that the Chinese residents in Canada should follow the position of Ottawa and mainstream society regarding Canada's relationship with the PRC.⁷⁸ Hence, Roy Mah and the Chinatown News endorsed the Trudeau government's decision to negotiate with Beijing as early as August 1968, preceding the Stockholm talks.⁷⁹ Douglas Jung too claimed that he encouraged the Sino-Canadian rapprochement when he was a member of the parliament for the Conservative Party in the 1950s. He also claimed that his stance was panned by the Nationalist supporters in the Chinese community. Nonetheless, Jung had attended the public functions hosted by the sympathizers of the KMT government, such as the famous luncheon at the Toronto Chinese Community Center in 1962.⁸⁰ On the whole, the Canadian-born Chinese representatives had intermittently and discreetly promoted the idea of Sino-Canadian rapprochement inside and outside of the Chinese community.

The *tusheng* leaders did not want to appear too involved in the China-related, partisan politics because they believed it would negatively affect them in their local ethnic communities and in the mainstream. Rather than obtaining their legitimacy through connections with the Chinese state as in the case of the old-

⁷⁷ Ng, pp. 92-93.

⁷⁸ Ng, 50-51. Also see Chinatown News, 3 December 1966.

⁷⁹ Chinatown News, 18 August 1968, pp. 3, 46.

⁸⁰ Chinatown News, 18 October 1970, 4-9. Also see Lum, 218-219.

timers, the native-born leaders engaged in Canadian party politics and local social movements. In Vancouver, for instance, the native-born group rose to prominence due to their struggles to protect the Chinatown community from urban redevelopment and intrusive municipal regulations.⁸¹ In these events, younger and older native-born representatives replaced those in the CBA as the brokers between their ethnic community and mainstream.

Despite its pronounced apathy to Chinese politics, the Chinatown News occasionally presented opinions that were alternative to the pro-KMT view of the Chinatown establishments. Reverend Andrew Lam, a recognized native-born Chinese minister and regular contributor to the magazine,⁸² wrote a piece on a television documentary on the Chinese civil war. The documentary, titled “The Struggle for China,” was produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), and Lam’s review came shortly before the Sino-Canadian rapprochement. In the review, Lam contended that both the Communist and Nationalist regimes were dictatorial, but the former was disciplined and concerned about the masses. Lam cited the redistribution of land to the peasants in the Mainland as an evidence of the Communists’ good intentions.⁸³ This piece was an exception in the content of the Chinatown News. Andrew Lam usually wrote on religious and non-controversial topics. For this review he agreed with the CBC’s account of the Chinese civil war that was slightly sympathetic towards the Communists. Overall, the representatives of the Canadian-born Chinese in Vancouver and

⁸¹ For detailed accounts on the local struggles in Vancouver Chinatown in the postwar period, please see Wai, pp. 4-24; and Ng, pp. 97-102, 108-120.

⁸² Ng, pp. 45 104-105.

⁸³ Chinatown News, 18 September 1970, pp. 55-57.

Chinatown News, which was one of their media outlets, reacted positively to the Canada-PRC ties.

The Vancouver branch of the Hong Men Society, which rivaled the local branch of the KMT in terms of membership and influence, had developed a paradoxical position on Chinese politics and on the impending international recognition of the PRC. To the outside observers, the Hong Men appeared to be avoiding politics in general and instead devoted itself to philanthropic and cultural activities. The notable exception to the apolitical appearance was Harry Con, who was an active Liberal Party member.⁸⁴ There were several reasons behind this façade. Firstly, many long-established ethnic organizations had their communication links severed when the Chinese Communists took control of the Mainland. The Hong Men too had significantly reduced its China-bound activities since the 1950s and shifted its attentions to Canada. Secondly, the Hong Men was aware that it needed broad-based support in the Chinese community in order to survive and to maintain its preeminence in the community.⁸⁵ The organization therefore offered itself as a non-partisan alternative to the KMT or pro-PRC faction. It also worked hard to identify and look after the interests of the immigrants.⁸⁶ As result, the Hong Men attracted a wide range of people in the local Chinese community. Straaton's study described the organization as being "universalistic" because it appealed to the old-timers, the Canadian-born, and

⁸⁴ Straaton, pp. 65-67, 104.

⁸⁵ Ng, pp. 60-61, 87. Also see Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 226-227.

⁸⁶ For instance, the Hong Men delegates in the CBA had sided with representatives of the postwar immigrants who wanted to be included in this umbrella organization. See Ng, pp. 78-79.

recent immigrants.⁸⁷ Like the native-born leaders, the Hong Men representatives built and presented a consensus around “neutrality” when the subject of Chinese politics was brought up. They were always on the record for democracy and against any dictatorship.⁸⁸

However, within the Hong Men there was a force that wanted the organization to represent the overseas Chinese in the affairs of their home country. What Con and Wickberg described as the persistent pressures of Chinese politics inside the Hong Men came from the international linkages among the Hong Men bodies and their collective history.⁸⁹ The Hong Men Society in the postwar years had developed a political arm called the “Hong Men Minzhidang” (洪門民治黨). Since its inception in 1946, this “political party” had called for mediation between the warring Nationalists and Communists. This position was bold considering the Cold War and the KMT’s dominance in North America’s Chinese communities. Ultimately, the Minzhidang was unsuccessful in being the mediator in the Chinese civil war and being an alternative party for the overseas Chinese in opposition to the KMT.⁹⁰ The Hong Men bodies around the world had little influence over the China policy of their respective host governments.

⁸⁷ Straaton, pp. 65-67. Straaton also notes that the Hon Men’s power was partly derived from its “extensive property holdings” and subsidiary bodies in Vancouver Chinatown. Besides the Chinese Times, the organization during the 1960s and 1970s owned an athletic club, a realty division, and a Chinese language school. Again see Straaton, pp. 66, 71.

⁸⁸ Straaton, pp. 66-67.

⁸⁹ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 226.

⁹⁰ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 226-227. Also see Straaton, p. 70.

On the local level, the Hong Men's neutrality meant that though the organization had sworn allegiance to the Republic of China, it refused to support the KMT. The Hong Men Society in Canada had a long and at times violent conflict with the KMT. This conflict stemmed from a fallout between the two sides after the 1911 Revolution. Apparently, the Hong Men held a grudge against Sun Yat-sen for not fulfilling his promises of rewards to the organization for its contribution to the revolution. However, the Hong Men was more resentful towards the KMT's takeover of the Chinatown politics.⁹¹

The Hong Men refused to support the Chinese Communists either, and the organization considered the PRC illegitimate government and opposed the use of the name "People's Republic of China" for mainland China. As a self-proclaimed defender of the Chinese nation and cultural traditions, the Hong Men in general saw communism as too radical and destructive. Moreover, many old-timers in the Chinese community were disappointed by the actions of the Communist regime. Some lost their relatives and properties in China because of the revolutionary violence during the Communist victory and the subsequent land reforms in Guangdong province in the 1950s.⁹² The leaders in the Hong Men organization continued to express opposition to the Communist regime even after it consolidated its rule. They contended that the Communist leader Mao Zedong established an authoritarian, single-party system that was no better than the KMT government under the absolute rule of Chiang Kai-Shek. In their meetings and in the Chinese Times editorials, the Hong Men representatives condemned both

⁹¹ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 104, 164-166.

⁹² Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 228, 239. Also see Lum, p. 226.

Mao and Chiang as dictators who divided China territorially and exploited the Chinese people.⁹³ More importantly, the Hong Men Society helped the founding of the ROC, so it could not endorse the PRC. The organization's prestige and interests were based on this patriotic and nationalistic project. Though the Hong Men was antagonistic towards the Nationalists, it sided with them on the matter of recognizing the PRC.

In 1970, the Hong Men leaders responded to the impending Canada-PRC ties by directing their criticisms and insults towards the PRC sympathizers in the Chinese community. Through the Chinese Times, the Hong Men attacked the PRC sympathizers as traitors, leftists, and conspirators in the overseas Chinese community. However, the Hong Men Society in Canada was starting to become internally divided over the issue of recognition. The position of the Vancouver branch organization was rather conspicuous because it deviated from other branch organizations. The Toronto and Montreal branch organizations wanted the Hong Men Society on a national level to acknowledge the PRC and abandon its support for the ROC. The branches in eastern Canada moreover had "leftist" political leaning. For instance, in 1959 the national body had shut down the Hong Men's newspaper in Toronto due to its viewpoint.⁹⁴ The recognition of the PRC ultimately threw the Hong Men Society into disarray. Its Vancouver and "Eastern Canada" (加東) faction fought openly against each other over this issue as well as over the control of the organization as a whole.

⁹³ Chinese Times, 6 July 1970, 3; and 13 October 1970. Also see Ng, pp. 86-87.

⁹⁴ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, p. 227. Also see Lum, p. 230.

On the whole, the Hong Men organization and the Chinese Times towards the end of the 1960s continued to editorialize on Chinese politics whether or not the community cared about the subject. Whereas the Chinatown News and its Canadian-born adherents declared neutrality to distance themselves from this kind of partisan conflict, the Chinese Times declared neutrality to get involved. Until the Sino-Canadian Communiqué, the official stance of the Hong Men's political wing was that the organization and overseas Chinese in general should recognize only the Republic of China. Furthermore, the ROC was a nation-state that no single political party could represent wholly.⁹⁵ Both supporters and opponents of the recognition were dissatisfied with this position. The radical press Da Zhong Bao, which had long been a supporter of the PRC, condemned the Chinese Times' position as being phony and unpatriotic. The Da Zhong Bao's accusation provoked a heated dispute with the Chinese Times and its readers in the months before the recognition.⁹⁶ Despite encountering the opposing pressures from the supporters of the Taipei and Beijing government, the Hong Men steadfastly maintained its independence. This stance was not unpopular, and it helped the organization to deflect charges of being leftist from the pro-Nationalist leaders, who used this label against their challengers.⁹⁷

Enthusiastic supporters of the PRC were a minority in Canada's Chinese community, but they were organized and vocal. In Vancouver, the earliest example of a Chinese social organization that identified with the Chinese

⁹⁵ Chinese Times, 13 July 1970, p. 3; and pp. 9-10, 13-15, October 1970, p. 3.

⁹⁶ Ng, pp. 87-88.

⁹⁷ Ng, pp. 37-38, 77-80. Also see Lum, p. 230.

Communists was the Chinese Worker Protective Association. It was a labor group that also contained some academics from the University of British Columbia. The Worker Protective Association opposed Canada's support of the Chinese Nationalists during the civil war, and it was the Chinese organization that celebrated the inauguration of the PRC by flying its flag on January 1, 1950. In 1958, the organization hosted a public function for a group of local Chinese who had visited Mainland.⁹⁸ By this time most Chinese immigrants no longer made return visits to their homeland because they were afraid of the Communist government and they did not want attract suspicion from the local authorities in the host country.

When the Chinese Workers Protective Association faded in the 1960s due to internal disputes over the Sino-Soviet split, several organizations took its place. The Chinese Youth Association, which was founded in 1954, took on the pro-Nationalist establishment in Vancouver Chinatown by aggressively promoting the PRC as the official Chinese government. This organization was composed of young new immigrants who believed that the Communist government had created a modern Chinese culture and reasserted a kind of Chinese national pride. The Da Zhong Bao was the Chinese Youth Association's media organ and was established in 1961. The Da Zhong Bao constantly praised the PRC for its anti-imperialist stance and for creating a progressive Chinese society that the overseas Chinese should be proud of. As mentioned before, this biweekly and bilingual newspaper also castigated local Chinese organizations and presses for

⁹⁸ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 233-234.

being lackeys of the Nationalist faction. However, the Da Zhong Bao at the same also insulted many non-partisans in the community by attacking them as unpatriotic and even “anti-Chinese”. Though the organization had only a few dozen members and was ostracized in the local Chinese community, it attracted some local-born Chinese youths. The local-born youths in the 1960s and 1970s were involved in radical ethnic and class politics, and they like the older local-born Chinese were dissatisfied with the community’s status quo and wanted to feel ethnic pride instead of cultural conservatism. For these youths, the Da Zhong Bao offered English-language supplements.⁹⁹

Presently, there are only fragments of the Da Zhong Bao left in the archive of the University of British Columbia. Hence, the research project could say little about this newspaper’s opinions on the recognition of the PRC and other affairs in the local Chinese community. According to the Chinese Times and Chinatown News, the Da Zhong Bao and its backers clearly demanded allegiance to the PRC from the Chinese community. The Communist government would therefore represent all Chinese. Neither the Chinese Times nor Chinatown News accepted this view, and they also criticized the Da Zhong Bao’s tactics of smear campaigns and coercion.¹⁰⁰

The Chinese Youth Association was closely aligned with the Canada-China Friendship Society (or Association), which was established in 1964 to lobby the Canadian government to normalize its relations with the PRC. The

⁹⁹ For information on the Chinese Youth Association, its agenda and activities see Ng, pp. 37, 86-88, 90.

¹⁰⁰ For examples, see Chinatown News, 18 December 1971, pp. 3-4, 94; and 3 March 1971, pp. 52-54. Also see Chinese Times, 10 October 1970, p. 3.

Canada-China Friendship Society was composed of mainly non-Chinese supporters of the PRC and Canadian-born professionals. Its spokesperson Andrew Joe, for instance, was a prominent Chinese-Canadian attorney, and his ties with the PRC officials had led to speculations that he would work for them after the recognition. Some members were also children of Canadian missionaries in China. By October 1970, the society boasted 400 members. However, it had little connection with the local Chinese immigrants.¹⁰¹

Another prominent Chinese-Canadian advocate for the PRC was Paul Lin. He was an academic who went to China and worked there for 15 years as a translator. When Lin returned to Canada, he appeared to be a strong believer in Chinese socialism and campaigned for the PRC's entry into the UN. In a speech at a public forum in Vancouver a year after the Sino-Canadian Communiqué, Lin claimed that the PRC would change the status quo in international relations because it would not assume "overlordship" over other countries. He also contended that Chinese socialism was the "best and last hope for mankind" and its method of mobilizing the masses was "more explosive than an atom bomb." Lin further argued that while changing the society and individuals by the Communist government was a "tortuous" process, people should not expect "color changes" (or compromises) in the revolution.¹⁰² Overall, the proponents of the recognition probably had more support from outside of the Chinese

¹⁰¹ The information on Andrew Joe and the Canada-China Friendship Society is mainly drawn from *Chinatown News* articles. See *Chinatown News*, 18 October 1970, pp. 8-9; and 3 April 1971, pp. 57-58. Also see Ng, p. 37; and Diane Lary "Political Participation amongst Chinese Canadians" in *The Last Half Century of Chinese Overseas*, ed. Elizabeth Sinn (Aberdeen, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1998), p. 219.

¹⁰² *Chinatown News*, 3 December 1971, pp. 46-47.

community before the late 1960s. The Cold War environment and the hegemonic position of the Nationalist faction in Chinatowns made sympathy for the PRC unpopular and dangerous in some instances. Nonetheless, the proponents of the recognition managed to express their view and attract a few followers.

3. The Chinatown News Coverage of the Recognition

3.1 The Immediate Response

The decision to recognize the PRC was based mainly on the interests of the Trudeau administration rather than a consideration of the Chinese-Canadian communities. Nonetheless, the divisions in the Vancouver Chinese community were revealed following the Sino-Canadian Communiqué as individuals and groups in the community publicly declared their allegiance to the PRC, ROC, or neither. There were points of contention between proponents and opponents of the recognition. The prospect of renewed cultural and socioeconomic ties with Mainland China created disputes between those who wanted to exploit this opportunity (for themselves and the rest of the community) and those who wanted to deny it. Furthermore, the rise of the PRC's diplomatic status and simultaneous decline of the ROC's had brought out conflicting sentiments of national pride and patriotism. The coverage from the Chinese-Canadian news presses showed an emotional and confusing debate on whether or not the community should celebrate or denounce this event (or show disinterest towards it). There was also the related debate on how the overseas Chinese should identify themselves and relate to the homeland given that the KMT's claim on them as the official Chinese government was nullified. Lastly, the recognition had

significantly undermined the authority of the pro-Nationalist leadership in Vancouver Chinatown. As result, competition in ethnic organizations and in ethnic representation was renewed and intensified.¹⁰³

The news presses in the Vancouver Chinese community were prepared for Ottawa's decision to recognize the PRC for some time. As mentioned earlier, the Chinatown News in August 1968 had already published an editorial that endorsed Ottawa's negotiation with Beijing. In this editorial, Mah discussed the reasons behind Ottawa's policy and expressed his mild opposition to the anti-recognition protests that occurred in the Chinese community. The protest was organized by the delegates of benevolent associations in 12 Canadian cities.¹⁰⁴ Mah stated that the opposition to the recognition within his community was "understandable", but he also contended that the protesters were ignoring Canada's interests and the realities of international politics.¹⁰⁵ The following excerpt from the editorial summarized Mah's argument:

...[The] older generation feels more strongly about the old country because of the family and emotional ties. Some whose relatives in China may have even experienced brutality and suffering under the Mao regime. But the protest was doomed from the beginning because at this juncture of world history the question of recognition of Red China is merely academic. In the fields of foreign relations, self-interest is paramount with nations – as with individuals.¹⁰⁶

The excerpt furthermore showed that Mah separated the Canadian-born Chinese from the older immigrants in his analysis on the community's reaction to

¹⁰³ Lum, pp. 217-218, 222-223.

¹⁰⁴ Chinatown News, 18 August 1968, p. 20.

¹⁰⁵ Chinatown News, 18 August 1968, pp. 3, 46.

¹⁰⁶ Chinatown News, 18 August 1968, pp. 3, 46.

the Sino-Canadian rapprochement. According to him, those who supported the negotiation between Canada and the PRC were “more attuned to Canadian outlook”. To define the Canadian or North American position, Mah cited a Financial Post article that claimed the PRC was “maturing” and wanted to establish contacts with the outside world in order to reduce world tensions. Countries like America and Canada therefore should take advantage of the situation. Mah also argued that the recognition opponents were bound to fail because they were fighting against an initiative that all federal parties had agreed on during the 1968 election.¹⁰⁷

Moreover, Mah believed that Chinese-Canadians supported the recognition because they were proud, loyal Canadian citizens and were apathetic about political affair in China. In the same editorial published in August 1968, Mah concluded that he and other Canadians of Chinese ancestry appreciated more fully of Canadian values, heritage and institutions simply due to their background.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the Chinatown News was making statements early on that depicted the Canadian-born Chinese representatives as useful intermediaries for the Chinese community. They in a sense advocated for the government and mainstream rather than the establishments in Chinatowns.

When Canada’s recognition of the PRC was finalized in October 1970, the Chinatown News reported that the reaction from the Vancouver Chinese community was “extremely low key”. The magazine acknowledged that the supporters of the PRC were “jubilant” and “diehard” ROC supporters were

¹⁰⁷ Chinatown News, 18 August 1968, pp. 3, 46.

¹⁰⁸ Chinatown News, 18 August 1968, pp. 3, 46.

disappointed. Nonetheless, Roy Mah again contended that most in the community, particularly the Canadian-born population, were “more concerned about the Canadian scene... such as the BC Lions chances of making the playoff”. As for the immigrants, Mah found that they too were “much more concerned about being good citizens” and their daily living in their “adopted country”.¹⁰⁹

The Chinatown News dismissed the claims made by the protesting Nationalist faction in Vancouver as before. Facing a great loss of power and prestige in the local Chinese community, leaders who were too close to the KMT continued their campaigns to discredit their opponents and to keep Canadian politicians interested in them. Lam Fong, the chair of the Vancouver branch of the KMT and the president of the Vancouver CBA, stirred up fear of communists infiltrating the overseas Chinese communities in his interview with the media at the time of the Sino-Canadian Communiqué.¹¹⁰ According to the Nationalist supporters, recognition would lead to the spread of communism in overseas Chinese community and mainstream society. Moreover, the PRC would pressure the overseas Chinese to send money back to the Mainland by intimidating them and holding their relatives in China as hostages. Fong had steadfastly kept his organization from switching allegiance to the PRC. A year later, Fong publicly stated that the Vancouver Chinese community was being threatened and controlled by communists, and he urged that the police and government should

¹⁰⁹ Chinatown News, 18 October 1970, pp. 1, 41. The “BC Lions” is a professional football team residing in Vancouver.

¹¹⁰ Chinatown News, 18 October 1970, pp. 8-9.

investigate the problem. He even wrote to local members of parliament, newspapers, and Prime Minister Trudeau about this matter.¹¹¹

The Chinatown News described the often-repeated Red Scare rumors as exaggerations and oversimplifications. Roy Mah acknowledged that the Chinese community felt uneasy and emotional during the negotiation, but the community had faith in the Canadian government after the negotiation had been completed. “After all, this is not the first communist government Canada has recognized,” said Mah, “and people realize now that it would be inconceivable for a foreign government to come into Canada and starting pushing Canadian citizens around.”¹¹² When Lam Fong publicly brought charges of communist infiltration, the Chinatown News reported that most in the Chinese community and mainstream were skeptical of these charges because Fong did not bring any evidence. The magazine additionally was rather critical in its coverage of this incident, noting that some in community had called Fong a troublemaker.¹¹³

The Chinatown News wanted to show Chinese-Canadian disinterest in Chinese politics as well as the community’s general acculturation and integration. The magazine also wanted to tread carefully around the issue of recognition in order to avoid conflicts with other groups of Chinese residents or organizations. Still, the Chinatown News published a lengthy article on 18 October 1970 titled “Around Chinatown: Reactions to Canada-China Ties”.¹¹⁴ This piece was followed by many columns that showed considerable interest from the Canadian-

¹¹¹ Chinatown News, 18 September 1971, pp. 51-53.

¹¹² Chinatown News, 18 October 1970, pp. 6-7.

¹¹³ Chinatown News, 18 September 1971, pp. 51-53.

¹¹⁴ Chinatown News, 18 October 1970, pp. 4-9.

born representatives on Chinatown politics regarding the recognition and Chinese politics. Additionally, articles like “Reactions to Canada-China Ties” indicated that the Chinatown News cooperated closely with the local mainstream news media. Roy Mah for instance claimed that he and other Chinese-Canadians were pressed by journalists from the Vancouver Sun and Vancouver Province to give opinions on the recognition of the PRC. Mah insisted that he and other reporters from the magazine were “reluctant” to opine because “the emotion on the subject was running deep” in the Chinese community.¹¹⁵ Nonetheless, Mah and other influential Chinese-Canadian leaders did many interviews with the Sun and Province journalists. Additionally, Chinatown News carried articles on the Chinese community from these English newspapers and agreed with them for the most part.¹¹⁶ Again, Mah had presented himself and his magazine as the voices of the Chinese community and political and cultural brokers, even though Mah and other Canadian-born Chinese appeared aloof from the community’s debates on Chinese politics.

3.2 The Chinatown News Making a Case for Recognition

The Chinatown News had readily approved the Canada-PRC ties, but it initially made its arguments carefully in order not to provoke the pro-Nationalists elements in the Chinatown establishments. After the Sino-Canadian Communiqué, the magazine tried to present a consensus, contending that the local Chinese community felt Ottawa’s decision was “long overdue” and had

¹¹⁵ Chinatown News, 18 December 1970, pp. 3-4.

¹¹⁶ For an example, see Chinatown News, 3 February 1971, pp. 60-61.

ended the hypocrisy of having a long, unofficial relationship with Beijing.¹¹⁷ “[If] the government has decided the move is good for Canada,” the magazine insisted, “then it’s good for all Canadian citizens.”¹¹⁸

Besides the arguments pertaining to Canada’s interests and political realism, the Chinatown News tried to invoke a sense of ethnic pride in the Chinese community. The Chinese-Canadian representatives who were interviewed by the magazine and mainstream newspapers stated that the Canada-China ties had brought relief to the community. The reason was that the event had separated the cultural and emotional attachment to the homeland from the “distasteful subject of politics”. Hence, the old and young generation in the community should be joyful that they were now able to show patriotic affections towards both Canada and Mainland China without feeling guilty.¹¹⁹ Though the Chinese residents in Canada were rapidly acculturating according to the magazine, they now could be more aware of their ethnic identity and in a more positive manner. Additionally, the Chinatown News had rarely reported on events or subjects related to China because it did not want to discredit its homegrown, Canadian image. Since recognition, however, the magazine started to abandon this mindset.¹²⁰

The Chinatown News also tried to invoke a sense of national or ethnic pride pertaining to homeland to advance its position and to appeal to those who had yet to consider Canada their own country. Janet Lum’s study points out that

¹¹⁷ Chinatown News, 18 October 1970, p. 4.

¹¹⁸ Chinatown News, 18 October 1970, p. 4.

¹¹⁹ Chinatown News, 18 October 1970, pp. 4, 8-9.

¹²⁰ Ng, p. 107.

many Chinese residents saw the recognition of the PRC as a “coming of age” for China. It was now a major power and no longer internally divided or externally threatened. For the non-partisan majority in the overseas community, the event therefore gave them “a basis for renewed self-worth and international regard”.¹²¹ An improvement in China’s image and power meant an improvement in the Chinese immigrants’ image and rights in the host country. Both the Chinese community and mainstream acknowledge this phenomenon in 1970. Harry Con and Edgar Wickberg’s study of Vancouver Chinese community also contended that the perceived ethnic and social differences often reflected “a difference in national power”.¹²² Though the PRC had not been as active in wooing the overseas Chinese as the ROC in the postwar era,¹²³ its diplomatic success had dramatically benefited them in terms of ego and political status. For some senior immigrants it may be the first good news about China they had received for several decades. For some Canadian-born residents, the recognition may have been the only good news about China in their lifetime.¹²⁴ One community spokesperson summarized this national pride and empowerment for the

Chinatown News:

...[Canada’s recognition of China] cannot fail but to instill a sense of pride among all persons of Chinese descent living in Canada. For the first time these people are seeing China emerging on its own, as a nation on its own.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Lum, pp. 236-237.

¹²² Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 270-271.

¹²³ Lum, pp. 223-224.

¹²⁴ Ng, p. 107.

¹²⁵ Chinatown News, 18 October 1970, p. 9.

Two years after Canada had recognized the PRC, the Chinatown News presented similar arguments in its celebration of the improving Sino-American relations, which was encouraged by President Richard Nixon's rapprochement policy and his visit to the Mainland in 1972. The magazine in June 1972 reported that friendly relations between the US and the PRC had bettered the mental health of the Chinese-Americans. According to Dr. John Wong, a Chinese-American psychiatrist, the mainstream media and education institutions used to describe China unfavorably. The stereotypical image of China as a poor and backward country had discouraged the Chinese-American youths from learning about the culture of their ancestral country as well as their contributions in America. The Chinese residents of the older generation also were depressed and suicidal. Dr. Wong argued that these harmful trends were reversed due to the Sino-American rapprochement. China's ascendancy on the international stage had removed the feeling of inferiority and self-hatred among the Chinese-Americans, who now learned that though China was undeveloped, it was "rich in culture and spirit".¹²⁶

Roy Mah agreed with Dr. Wong's assessment in an editorial following this report and contended it was "equally applicable" in Canada.¹²⁷ To some extent the youth of Chinese descent in Vancouver had a renewed interests in their heritage and in their community following recognition. For instance, Ng's study showed that the local-born youth were very active in the cultural and political

¹²⁶ Chinatown News, 18 June 1972, pp. 23-24.

¹²⁷ Chinatown News, 18 July 1972, pp. 3, 62.

activities in Chinatown during much of the 1970s.¹²⁸ Additionally, the fear perpetuated by the Nationalist supporters that the community would be discriminated against and suspected for being pro-communist did not materialize.¹²⁹ Instead of these negatives, Roy Mah concentrated on the positives for both the older generation and descendents. In articles concerning ethnic pride and psychological relief, the Chinatown News suggested to the skeptical Chinatown elders that the Canada-China ties would help the local-born group to become more Chinese and less alienated from the community. The older settlers and new immigrants tended to feel resignation about what they perceived as a loss of culture among their children.¹³⁰ The Canada-China ties could help with the cultural retention and promotion by instilling confidence and enthusiasm into the local-born.¹³¹

Roy Mah also concurred with Dr. Wong that the Chinese communities in North America needed to address their own prejudices and become more committed to their host countries. This comment targeted the longtime settlers and new immigrants, who the local-born leaders felt were stuck in a transient, xenophobic mentality. Next to racism, Chinese politics was to blame for the isolation of the Chinese communities.¹³² The local-born leaders therefore saw recognition as a chance to move forward and a justification for further integration

¹²⁸ Ng, pp. 109-120.

¹²⁹ The Toronto's Chinese-Canadians leaders, for instance, had raised numerous concerns about the Canadian recognition of China having negative impacts on the image of their community. See Chinatown News, 3 November 1970, pp. 23-25.

¹³⁰ Ng, pp. 53-54.

¹³¹ Chinatown News, 18 July 1972, pp. 3, 62.

¹³² Chinatown News, 18 July 1972, pp. 3, 62.

and acculturation. For them, the opening up of China paralleled the opening up the Chinese-Canadian community.

The Chinatown News and Canadian-born representatives supported the Canadian recognition of the PRC, but they did not want to provoke a conflict with the elderly settlers and the Chinatown establishment. The senior *tusheng* elements acknowledged their politics, mentality and culture were different from their immigrant parents. Nonetheless, the *tusheng* representatives respected the Chinatown elders and tried not to offend them in their demands, such as organizational reforms or abandoning Chinese politics. There were several reasons behind the *tusheng's* respect or lack of criticism towards the older immigrants. Ng points out that the first generation of local-born came from the core group of the early 20th century, South China immigrants, and they grew up in Chinatown. Thus, the local-born had emotional if not kinship bond with the older immigrants. The senior *tusheng* experienced racism and socioeconomic hardships with their parents. They also experienced the fervor of overseas Chinese nationalism in their community during the 1930s and 1940s. Hence, native-born leaders like Roy Mah empathized with older immigrants more than the newcomers and young Chinese-Canadian activists.¹³³ Mah for a long time would try to persuade the Chinatown elders that the Canadian recognition of the PRC was a good thing, and his criticisms against traditional organizations initially were not harsh.

¹³³ Ng, p. 52.

To convince the Chinatown establishment and to deflect possible attacks from them, the native-born leaders first dissociated themselves from the pro-PRC faction in their Chinese community. The community consensus on recognition presented by the Chinatown News was either one of quiet acceptance or cautious optimism. Roy Mah stated that support for recognition should not be equated with sympathy towards the Chinese Communists. "And while some may even express admiration toward Beijing for her accomplishments," Mah wrote in an editorial on 18 October 1970, "they would not contemplate to live under such a regime."¹³⁴ Likewise, Douglas Jung felt "vindicated" by the Canada-PRC ties, but he stated in the magazine that this did not "necessarily imply approval" of the PRC government or ideology.¹³⁵ A year after recognition, Jung dismissed the claim made by the Canada-China Friendship Association that the Chinese community was happy about the Canadian recognition of the PRC. In an interview on a protest against the PRC's entry into the UN at the Vancouver court house, Jung stated that the pro-Nationalist agitators were now a minority. He then contended that the majority in the Chinese community, including some Nationalist supporters, was turning neutral and treated recognition and UN admission with resignation.¹³⁶ On the whole, the remarks made by Mah and Jung showed that the senior Canadian-born leaders at the outset tried to help the Chinatown elders to save some face after recognition.

¹³⁴ Chinatown News, 18 October 1970, p. 1.

¹³⁵ Chinatown News, 18 October 1970, pp. 7-8.

¹³⁶ Chinatown News, 3 October 1971, pp. 46-47.

The Chinatown News moreover was very critical towards the extremists who supported the PRC. Even though the magazine endorsed recognition, it suffered attacks from organizations like the Chinese Youth Association and its press Da Zhong Bao. The radical newspaper considered the Chinatown News as a part of the establishment in the Chinese community. Moreover, the Da Zhong Bao was displeased that the *tusheng* elites like Roy Mah refused to get involved in Chinese politics and side with the pro-PRC faction. The severity of the criticisms from the Da Zhong Bao forced the Chinatown News to respond. However, the Chinatown News also used this conflict as an opportunity to present the Canadian-born group as independent and moderate. In December 1970, Roy Mah wrote editorial that defended his view that the acculturated Chinese-Canadians cared more about Grey Cup football than recognition. Earlier, the Da Zhong Bao carried a letter that criticized Mah's analysis that that Chinese-Canadians were apathetic or uncertain towards recognition.¹³⁷ This letter accused Mah of depicting Chinese-Canadians as "petty beings of low mentality" and as having "inferiority complex". It also charged Mah of slandering the PRC government for talking about the community's fears of communist infiltration and demands for remittances.¹³⁸ Mah in his editorial countered that the Da Zhong Bao was a "dogmatic ideologist". Mah was proud that he and other Chinese-Canadians were "tolerant, middle-of-the roaders".¹³⁹ They did not have Chinese politics baggage.

¹³⁷ Chinatown News, 18 December 1970, pp. 3-4, 94.

¹³⁸ Chinatown News, 18 December 1970, pp. 3-4.

¹³⁹ Chinatown News, 18 December 1970, p. 94.

Despite their professed neutrality, the Canadian-born representatives knew that the elders might see the attitude of the Chinese-Canadian youths towards recognition as an act of rebellion against them. Hence, the *tusheng* leaders tried to capitalize on the supposed disinterest of the younger generation (notwithstanding the Chinese Youth Association) in homeland politics. Unlike other Chinese ethnic presses that reported mainly (if not only) on the positions of their respective backers or ideological affiliates, the Chinatown News gauged the reaction from Chinese residents of various backgrounds living across Canada and the US.¹⁴⁰ In the case of Chinese-Canadian youths, the magazine not only expressed their views but also defended them. For instance, the magazine commended a Chinese-Canadian teenager who was quoted to have said that the Chinese youths did not care about Chinese politics. This teenager instead wanted more recreation facilities and more “opportunities to meet local people – white and Chinese on an equal basis”. From this quote, the magazine concluded that “it was rather refreshing to see so many articulate voices speaking up on the subject.”¹⁴¹ Overall, Chinatown News used the coverage on the Canada-China ties to present itself as a community-wide news media that was reasonable and objective. Its coverage also showed that the native-born leaders tried to bring

¹⁴⁰ The Chinatown News had used its “Around Chinatowns” and special features section to report or mention the reactions from Chinese communities in North America to the Sino-Canadian and Sino-American rapprochement. Most of these articles were about major Chinese communities like the ones in Toronto, Vancouver, New York, and Honolulu. However, the magazine does not ignore the politics and social developments of less recognized communities like Victoria, Winnipeg, and Hamilton. For example, the magazine in December 1970 put forth a column that discussed the response to recognition from the Chinese students studying at University of Manitoba (Winnipeg). These students, who mainly from Hong Kong, were cynical about both Nationalist and Communist government, but they “readily approved” recognition because they believed that 700 million people living in the Mainland “cannot be denied”. See Chinatown News, 3 December 1970, pp. 51-52.

¹⁴¹ Chinatown News, 3 February 1971, pp. 60-61.

together the contentious group and individuals in the community. However, it is unclear whether the majority of the local Chinese at the time saw the Chinatown News and tusheng representatives as being consensus-builders.

Another argument that the Chinatown News brought forth in support of the Canadian recognition of the PRC was that the mainstream Canadian society approved Ottawa's decision. Moreover, this event created friendlier relations between the Chinese and non-Chinese and not the opposite. Those working in the China Arts and Crafts company, a cooperative selling goods and publications from the Mainland, reported to the Chinatown News that when Canada recognized the PRC they received "messages of goodwill and congratulations" from people they never had contact with.¹⁴² In November 1970, the magazine reported that Victoria and Vancouver warmly welcomed the crew of a visiting Chinese freighter called the Red Flag. At a dinner with the freighter crew and members of the Canada-China Friendship Association, the mayor of Victoria hoped that the PRC would set up its consulate in his city.¹⁴³

Since the Canadian recognition of the PRC, the Chinatown News had been reporting news that showed the mainstream having a greater acceptance of China and Chinese in general. The most exciting of these events were the visits of the Chinese ping pong team to Vancouver and other Canadian cities of 1971 to 1972.¹⁴⁴ Roy Mah gave a glowing assessment of the tour and argued that the

¹⁴² Chinatown News, 18 October 1970, p. 9.

¹⁴³ Chinatown News, 18 November 1970, pp. 48, 52.

¹⁴⁴ Chinatown News, 18 October 1971, p. 26; and 18 April 1972, pp. 3, 62.

Canadian public was able to “grasp the significance” of the ping pong diplomacy in terms of Canada-China relations and international relations.¹⁴⁵

...At every city where the touring team appeared there were loud and long ovations as Chinese and Canadian players marched arm-in-arm to the playing area to acknowledge the cheers from the crowd... Goodwill builds bridges. It reaches out to communicate and cooperate.¹⁴⁶

Mah also noted the “caliber of personage showing up to greet the Chinese players”, such as provincial premiers, federal ministers, and the governor general.¹⁴⁷ Their presence again suggested that the Canadian recognition of the PRC had not only elevated the status of China but also the status of Chinese living abroad. Nonetheless, Mah concluded that strong desires and grass root movements from both the Canadian and Canadian society produced these successful exchanges.¹⁴⁸

At the same time, the Chinatown News dismissed challenges to the consensus that there was little to no public hostility towards recognition. For instance, the magazine in June 1971 lightly remonstrated against the premier of British Columbia, W. A. C. Bennett, for allowing the Taiwan flag to be flown at a trade fair in the Pacific Northwest Exhibition (PNE) arena. Premier Bennett apparently supported the “two-China policy”, and he purposely flew the Taiwan flag against the order from the DEA Minister Mitchell Sharp. The Chinatown News reporter criticized the premier for ignoring the fact that neither the PRC nor

¹⁴⁵ Chinatown News, 18 April 1972, pp. 3, 62.

¹⁴⁶ Chinatown News, 18 April 1972, p. 62.

¹⁴⁷ Chinatown News, 18 April 1972, p. 3.

¹⁴⁸ Chinatown News, 18 April 1972, pp. 3, 62.

ROC supported the two-China policy because each claimed to be the government for all of the country.¹⁴⁹ “If Mr. Bennett is in substantial agreement with [the Nationalist] claim,” wrote the anonymous reporter, “he should said so.”¹⁵⁰ This column concluded that the premier’s stance was unrealistic, a term often used by Roy Mah to describe the opponents of recognition.

The article on the “flag flap” at the PNE however was one of the few instances in which the Chinatown News commented on Chinese politics. The magazine tried to maintain an objective distance from this subject, but it still carried some of the assumptions related to a nationalist narrative. For example, the article on the flag flap at the PNE expressed the belief that China as a state and nation could never be fragmented.

...For sooner or later Peking and Taipei will compose their differences and reunite the country once more. Just as she has done many times in her long and circuitous history... On this even the most conservative historians can agree.¹⁵¹

Moreover, the Chinatown News position on the Mainland-Taiwan division did not deviate too far from the patriotic yet non-partisan overseas Chinese. In the column on the visit made by the Chinese freighter, the columnist Lincoln Mar predicted that the “moderate elements” in Taiwan and Mainland would eventually gain power and reunite the two governments “with Taiwan sitting as the opposition”.¹⁵² Mar’s prediction was compatible with the stance or hope of the Vancouver Hong Men organization. On the other hand, Mar also wrote that he

¹⁴⁹ Chinatown News, 18 June 1971, pp. 48-49.

¹⁵⁰ Chinatown News, 18 June 1971, p. 49.

¹⁵¹ Chinatown News, 18 June 1971, p. 49.

¹⁵² Chinatown News, 18 November 1971, pp. 48-49.

would not say more about the subject until the reunification had occurred. He noted that most of the older generation in the local Chinese community simply refused to accept the Canadian government's decision, which was taken without their consent.¹⁵³

If the Chinatown News could not appeal to the skeptics with arguments about ethnic pride and improved public image, the magazine would then appeal to them by touching upon their practical self-interests. Since October 1970, the Chinatown News carried splashy articles and advertisements that discussed how recognition had brought endless and immediate benefits to Canadians and Chinese-Canadians. The easing of the travel restriction to Mainland, for example, was an important benefit that the older and younger generation expected with the formalization of the Canada-China ties. Douglas Jung claimed the old-timers, particularly those who were Canadian citizens, were now better off because they could make return visits to their native places without worrying about their personal safety.¹⁵⁴

Roy Mah too lobbied the Canadian government for a direct commercial air link between the two countries through the Pacific Ocean for cultural and economic reasons. Mah in an editorial argued that a Pacific air route would save time and avoid layovers for Chinese-Canadians who were eager to visit their ancestral village.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, he believed that Vancouver would have an advantage in trade and tourism because it "is the most logical terminal" for the

¹⁵³ Chinatown News, 18 November 1971, pp. 48-49.

¹⁵⁴ Chinatown News, 18 October 1970, p. 7.

¹⁵⁵ Chinatown News, 3 August 1970, pp. 3, 55.

trans-Pacific route.¹⁵⁶ The several Chinese-Canadian businesspeople interviewed by the magazine echoed Mah's view.¹⁵⁷

After Roy Mah had visited China with Prime Minister Trudeau and other Canadian officials in 1973, he was convinced that the Mainland was safe for overseas Chinese who should make return visits to their native places. Mah even wrote a review for a travel guide to China that was specifically for tourists of Chinese origin. In the review, Mah wholeheartedly agreed with the guide's claims that the PRC had no claim on overseas Chinese and that the society in Mainland China was relatively stable.¹⁵⁸ The Chinatown News in the early 1970s would carry articles about Mainland China that challenged the orthodox view on the country held by the older generation and pro-Nationalist faction. These articles disputed the perception that the PRC government was tyrannical and the Chinese society was undergoing a violent revolution. They instead described Mainland China as making progress in its modernization, and the people living there as materially satisfied.¹⁵⁹ Contrary to the critics of the PRC, much of China's culture and environment were unmolested but open to tourists according to the magazine.¹⁶⁰ Though most of these positive pieces about the Mainland were written during and after Roy Mah's visit, a few of them existed in 1972. They were quite similar to the articles in the Da Zhong Bao that glorified the

¹⁵⁶ Chinatown News, 3 August 1970, p.3.

¹⁵⁷ For an example, see Chinatown News, 18 October 1970, p. 9.

¹⁵⁸ Chinatown News, 18 January 1974, p. 15.

¹⁵⁹ For examples, see the article, "Brothers Tell of Changing China" in Chinatown News, 3 July 1972, pp. 11-14. Also see article, "Commune Offers Better Life for Peasants" in Chinatown News, 18 January 1974, p. 12.

¹⁶⁰ For examples, see article, "Peking: City of Outstanding Attraction" in Chinatown News, 3 December 1973, pp. 10-11. Also see "Loyang and Kweiling: Magnate for Tourists," in Chinatown News 18 December 1973, pp. 14-15.

PRC.¹⁶¹ However, the main intention of the Chinatown News was to end the Cold War mentality and the distrust towards the PRC government in the local Chinese community.

Economic and cultural exchanges were other benefits from the Canadian recognition of the PRC that the magazine constantly discussed. Andrew Joe of the Canada-China Friendship Society was quoted in the magazine as to have said that British Columbia in particular would gain from increased trade with the PRC, which had a “tremendous” consumer power of 700 to 800 millions. He also expected that a permanent Chinese trade delegation would be located here.¹⁶² The business class of the Vancouver Chinese community began to court the PRC government soon after recognition. In January 1971, the magazine reported that business people along with other organizations in the local Chinese community had held a public reception for the PRC ambassador at the Chinese Youth Association’s headquarter.¹⁶³ Apparently, the local Chinese-Canadian businesses were to overlook the ideology and politics that the Chinese Youth Association had represented. The Chinese-Canadian businesspeople, particularly those belonging to the postwar generation and *tusheng* group, had long maintained neutrality because they did not want to create trading difficulties with the Mainland and Taiwan.¹⁶⁴ Nonetheless, the business class in general, as Chinese merchants in Toronto had told the magazine, inevitably had to deal with

¹⁶¹ Ng, p. 107.

¹⁶² Chinatown News, 18 October 1970, p. 8.

¹⁶³ Chinatown News, 18 January 1971, p. 70.

¹⁶⁴ Chinatown News, 3 March 1971, p. 52.

the Mainland.¹⁶⁵ Once Canada established diplomatic ties with the PRC, many Chinese-Canadian businesses actively dissociated themselves from the KMT because they “[wanted] nothing to disrupt this delicate arrangement”.¹⁶⁶

The Chinatown News did not merely report on the Chinese-Canadians businesses taking advantages of recognition and opening up of the Mainland. The magazine also actively tried to get the local Chinese community and the mainstream interested in these economic and cultural opportunities. Since October 1970, the magazine inserted splashy advertisements and special reports to entice its readers on all kinds of potentials in China. For instance, the magazine in June 1972 inserted an advertisement that claimed British Columbia reaped great reward from its jade trade with China.¹⁶⁷ In the same month the University of British Columbia put a notice in the magazine that offered summer workshop for school teachers on China. The notice stated that the workshop was the result of China’s emergence in the international scene.¹⁶⁸

Some of these promotional articles came from other Canadian American newspapers. In April and May 1972, the magazine carried a two-part article from the Financial Post titled “Everybody Wants Advice on China”. The author, John Schreiner, talked about the experts on China being sought after by the Canadian business, entertainment and academic sector. Some of these experts were Chinese and non-Chinese academics who preferred the PRC to the ROC in terms political support or research focus. A few of the Chinese experts were

¹⁶⁵ Chinatown News, 18 October 1971, p. 20

¹⁶⁶ Chinatown News, 18 October 1971, p. 20

¹⁶⁷ Chinatown News, 3 June 1972, p. 29.

¹⁶⁸ Chinatown News, 18 June 1972, p. 10.

critical of the scramble for China by Western businesses. However most of them were glad that they were being swamped by people who wanted to learn or import Chinese goods, knowledge and culture.¹⁶⁹ The Chinatown News additionally inserted an one-page advertisement from the China Commercial Corporation in the first part of the Financial Post article. This firm was offering its shares and its main selling point was that it was doing businesses in the Mainland.¹⁷⁰

The Chinatown News caught on the hype around China early on and tried to be at the forefront of this phenomenon. Roy Mah joined a chorus of businesses and academics in demanding the Canadian government establish institutions for Chinese and Asian studies. In an editorial written in November 1971, Mah suggested that the opening of China by Canadian recognition was an “epoch-making juncture in our history”.¹⁷¹ Hence, he believed that Canada needed experts in order to develop its own policies pertaining to China and the rest of Asia.¹⁷² In general, these promotional articles again indicated that the Chinatown News was very positive towards the Canada-PRC ties and wanted to convey this mood to the rest of the Chinese community and mainstream. The promotional articles’ basic contention was that recognition created the popular fascination with China, and this healthy fascination helped Chinese-Canadians integrate and at the same renew their interests in their ethnicity. The promotional articles certainly appealed to the interests and egos of the Chinese residents who

¹⁶⁹ Chinatown News, 18 April 1972, pp. 16-19; and 3 May 1972, pp. 8-10.

¹⁷⁰ Chinatown News, 18 April 1972, p. 16.

¹⁷¹ Chinatown News, 18 November 1971, p. 18.

¹⁷² Chinatown News, 18 November 1971, pp. 3, 18.

read the magazine. The magazine furthermore implicitly set itself up as a contact for outsiders who wanted to know more about the local Chinese community and China. Roy Mah took advantage of the hype and tried to be a leading expert on China.

3.3 Sojourner versus Chinese-Canadian: The Politicization of Canadian-Born Chinese

The Chinatown News provided a detailed account of the conflicts within and between organizations in the Vancouver Chinese community following recognition. This account again set the younger, Canadian-born Chinese apart from older, immigrant Chinese. It moreover made light of the growing struggle between the two parties over the politics and culture of the local Chinese community. The politically active *tusheng* group now wanted people of their own background to represent the Chinese-Canadian community by taking over the leadership and agenda of the traditional organizations. They furthermore wanted to pluralize the definition of Chinese culture and identity to include a more indigenous (or “Canadian”) Chinese identity. The *tusheng* group ultimately wanted their settler culture to prevail over the sojourner culture, which was promoted by the status quo in Chinatown. Canadian recognition of the PRC thus created a momentum to the *tusheng* representatives like Roy Mah to press their demands and agenda upon the elders in the traditional organizations.

The Chinatown News’ coverage acknowledged this momentum. The native-born leaders would use recognition and their disconnection with the KMT (or Chinese politics) to justify their takeover of community politics and culture.

Their issues and grievances were mainly local, but Chinese politics and allegiance to the KMT were always involved in the debates within the community and ethnic organizations. The Chinatown News sanitized the conflicts between the local-born group and the elders by claiming that these conflicts were not serious and that resolutions would soon be created. Moreover, the magazine implicitly acted as mediator among the contentious factions, including the extreme Taiwan and PRC supporters, to be civil and reach a compromise. Nonetheless, the Chinatown News always sided with the *tusheng* representatives. It especially highlighted the reformers who wanted to change structures, functions and policies of the community's institutions, starting with their association with the KMT.

A couple months after recognition, the Chinatown News and other local media observed that the CBA was undergoing a power struggle. Some CBA members were wavering about the organization's stance on totally supporting the KMT and Taiwan despite recent developments. The Chinatown News in February 1971 reported that the "young turks" in the CBA moved to de-link the organization from the KMT and China in general. This motion meant that the CBA would remove the ROC flag on its building and remove the portrait of Chiang Kai-shek from its meeting hall. The CBA moreover would not sponsor public functions for Chinese government officials, whether they are from Taiwan or Mainland. Leaders of the "young turks" asserted that organizations should focus on local affairs rather than Chinese politics. They also argued that by having a non-partisan stance, the CBA will attract more the youths in the Chinese

community and thus ensure the organization's survival.¹⁷³ However, this motion failed, and when the "young turks" repeatedly tried to remove the KMT symbols from the meeting hall, the recalcitrant KMT supporters replanted them.

Additionally, the benevolent associations across Canada in June 1971 again declared their allegiance to Taiwan.¹⁷⁴

Roy Mah expected these young turks to eventually take over the leadership of the organization. He also hoped that the transition in leadership would be smooth. Mah clearly stated his support for reforming the CBA in the following excerpts of a commentary written in February 1971.

THE WINDS of change are buffeting the Chinese Benevolent Association. In their wake, they have torn ever wider the generation gap in the placid and tranquil community that is Chinatown. And it's not just a local phenomenon. The stirring is being felt in all major North American cities where the CBA is extant.

The Chinese Benevolent Association has a long and illustrious history of service to the community dating back to the frontier era... It was an indispensable organization to the settlers who relied on its facilities to ease their adjustment pains after arrival in a new land.

...The social forces are of an altogether different nature than the ones encountered by our forefathers at the turn of the century. It calls for new attitudes and new approaches to deal with modern realities...

...This does not mean that our elders no longer have anything positive to contribute to community life. We realized that it is just as vital that there are alternative sources to which they could direct their energies to satisfy their spiritual and emotional well-being. Many organizations within the community would value the wise and experienced advice which they could provide.

¹⁷³ Chinatown News, 3 February 1971, pp. 61-62.

¹⁷⁴ Chinatown News, 18 June 1971, p. 51.

But if Chinatown is to benefit more from inter-community contacts, the CBA would require a new type of leadership, to be drawn in the main from the younger elements. This group understands the intricacies of urbanization...

Conscious of their heritage, the younger generation will not turn their backs to the community if invited to participate in its programs. Their agenda would presumably include such items as polishing up the image of Chinatown....

Having given unselfishly of their services and dedication to the community, our elders have earned their spurs, and a comfortable retirement...¹⁷⁵

Roy Mah's editorial echoed the demands of the reformers. The CBA, which according to Straaton was essentially a federation of associations,¹⁷⁶ was too important to be left to the elders and KMT supporters. The insiders and some outsiders knew that the CBA was losing its appeal and power in the 1960s and 1970s. However, it was the only organization that could represent the local Chinese community (excluding the native-born group). The CBA at least gave this impression of the mainstream. The government and other Chinese organizations had supplanted the benevolent associations in providing welfare for the Chinese residents and helping immigrants adapt to the new environment.¹⁷⁷ Nonetheless, the Vancouver CBA could still bring together all the traditional organizations in the community for various political and cultural

¹⁷⁵ Chinatown News, 3 February 1971, pp. 3, 74.

¹⁷⁶ Straaton, p. 91.

¹⁷⁷ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 254-255. The elderly population in Canada's Chinese community by the 1970s relied much on government health care and pensions. Chinese churches and charitable foundations created by professionals and businesspeople provided some social services in conjunction with governmental assistance.

functions. Hence, whoever controlled it would become the community spokesperson.¹⁷⁸

However, Roy Mah and the reformers challenged the status quo with the best intentions. They saw the struggle in the CBA as a major change in the local Chinese community's path of development. On one hand, Mah wanted to restore the CBA's credibility by restoring the organization's historical functions, such as providing welfare to immigrants and fighting for the rights of the community. After all, the CBA had founded Chinese public hospitals, provided welfare for needy, crusaded against the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act, etc. The contemporary critics and reformers felt the CBA in the 1960s and 1970s had lost its usefulness to the community because it no longer carried out its prewar functions.¹⁷⁹ Mah in his editorial suggested that with the Canadian recognition of the PRC, the elders and KMT supporters should now return the CBA back to the community. Mah also listed a series of services that the CBA should now offer, such as English language education, recreational facilities, employment advisement and etc.¹⁸⁰

On the other hand, Mah wanted a peaceful revolution in the local Chinese community and organizations. His interpretation of the CBA's historical role was very different from the organizations' insiders who held the orthodox view. For the conservatives, the CBA was not a charity but a "channel of communication" with the home country and local Canadian authority.¹⁸¹ Mah however discounted this aspect of the organization. Chinese politics was not really a part of the CBA's

¹⁷⁸ Straaton, pp. 91, 94.

¹⁷⁹ Wai, pp. 24-25.

¹⁸⁰ Chinatown News, 3 February 1971, p. 3, 74.

¹⁸¹ Ng, p. 78.

“illustrious history”. In Mah’s view, Chinese politics was mainly a spiritual matter for the elders, who now needed to find other outlets to satisfy themselves.¹⁸² Moreover, Mah’s editorial in February 1971 implied that the CBA’s leadership and membership needed a complete overhaul. In his mind, those who could provide the new services that the local Chinese community needed had to be drawn from the Canadian-born or acculturated immigrant category.¹⁸³

Canadian-born representatives also had a different agenda for the local Chinese community. They in particular wanted to remake Vancouver Chinatown according to their needs, values, and images. This movement was not motivated by recognition per se but by municipal government’s urban renewal campaign in the 1960s and 1970s. Before discussing the agenda of the local-born Chinese, I will first give an account of the politicization the Chinese community in response to the urban renewal campaign.

The Vancouver City Hall during this period wanted to improve the Chinatown-Strathcona area by building public housings and freeways. Before these structures could be built, the City Hall began a slum clearing campaign, which threatened to destroy many businesses and residential homes in and around Chinatown. Consequently, Chinese and non-Chinese in the area organized to protect their interests against the City Hall’s overzealous urban renewal plan.¹⁸⁴ The CBA voiced its opposition to the City Hall’s plan, but it was not as effective or famous as the Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants

¹⁸² Chinatown News, 3 February 1971, pp. 3, 74.

¹⁸³ Chinatown News, 3 February 1971, pp. 3, 74.

¹⁸⁴ Wai, pp. 4-11.

Association (SPOTA), which was more popular and broad-based. SPOTA not only included people from the traditional organizations like Harry Con, but also young Chinese-Canadian and non-Chinese social activists. The Chinese-Canadian activists were professionals and college students.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, some of them belonged to the third generation descendents of the prewar immigrants. Paul Yee, a prominent Chinese-Canadian writer from Vancouver, has described the third generation Chinese as being influenced by political activism, counter-cultural influences, and local struggles. Though many in the third generation had lived outside of Chinatown and were acculturated, the struggle to defend Chinatown in the late 1960s and early 1970s made them socially and ethnically conscious.¹⁸⁶

The young and senior native-born Chinese did not see everything eye-to-eye. For instance, the Chinatown News initially supported the City Hall's urban renewal plan in face of popular opposition.¹⁸⁷ However, both groups were dissatisfied with the community's leadership and direction. Both groups also believed they had a lot to offer to the community. In November 1971, some Chinese youth activists created an organization called Chinese-Canadians for a Better Community. In an interview with the Da Zhong Bao, these youth activists ridiculed the "so-called leaders" who ignored or covered up the run-down

¹⁸⁵ Wai, p. 7. Also see Ng, pp. 97-102.

¹⁸⁶ For a detailed history on third generation Canadian-born Chinese youths in Vancouver and the CCC in the 1970s see Paul Yee, "Where Have All The Young People Gone? Vancouver's Chinese Cultural Center and Its Native-Born," in Asian Canadians Regional Perspectives: Selections from the Proceedings of Asian Canadian Symposium V, Mount Saint Vincent University, May 23 to 26, 1981, eds. K. Victor Ujimoto & Gordon Hirabayashi (Halifax: Mount Saint Vincent University, 1981), 355-368. Also see Ng, pp. 112, 117-120.

¹⁸⁷ Ng, p. 99.

condition of Vancouver Chinatown. They believed that a new community center would solve the social problems in the community, such as the exploitation of cheap labor, alienation of the youth, and lack of social services.¹⁸⁸ Similar sentiment could be found in Mah's editorial on the struggle in the CBA.

For too long Pender Street has presented a picture of nothing more than a tourist trap of restaurant and curio shops. The younger generation would be able to come with new ideas to convert this district into a cultural island in a sea of glass and chrome.¹⁸⁹

Roy Mah and reformers in the CBA agreed with the youth activists, as indicated in the above excerpt, and they too wanted a community center. Besides providing social services, Mah and his like-minded *tusheng* leaders wanted the new community center to show off the Chinese-Canadian contribution to multiculturalism.¹⁹⁰ Roy Mah and the Chinatown News had supported the Canadian government's multicultural policy since its inception in the early 1960s. Through multiculturalism and cooperation with the government, the Canadian-born Chinese representatives could become the official intermediaries between their community and mainstream. Their status would improve vis-à-vis the representatives of old-timers and newcomers. Under the multicultural context, the Canadian-born group furthermore could express a heritage that was more indigenous and less China-bound.¹⁹¹ The Chinatown News, for example, had

¹⁸⁸ Ng, pp. 109-110

¹⁸⁹ Chinatown News, 3 February 1971, p. 74.

¹⁹⁰ Ng, pp. 109-110

¹⁹¹ Ng, pp. 104-106.

published many articles since recognition that articulated support for multiculturalism and celebrated Chinese history in Canada.¹⁹²

The struggles over these local issues were inevitably related to (if not swallowed by) the conflicts over Chinese politics and support for the KMT government. Both the challengers and the defenders of the status quo in the community brought them up during debates. The status quo's affiliation with the KMT was the main weakness that the challengers like Roy Mah could exploit. Conversely, loyalty to Taiwan and Red Scare campaigns were strategies that the leaders in the traditional organizations used in order not to lose control to the Canadian-born and new immigrants.¹⁹³ However, these strategies backfired. The representatives for the Canadian-born and newcomers perceived that a small group of KMT supporters from Taiwan had hijacked the CBA. The organization moreover became a propaganda arm for Taiwan and withdrew itself from community affairs. As result, the challengers throughout the 1970s expressed their criticisms on the CBA and KMT to both the Chinese and mainstream media.¹⁹⁴

For instance, Roy Mah in 1972 wrote two more editorials that were critical of the CBA's involvement in Chinese politics and its isolation from the rest of the community. The first one, which appeared in the Chinatown News on March 18, was a rebuke of the CBA's absence in a recent conference on multiculturalism. Mah noted that representatives from the federal government and other ethnic

¹⁹² For examples, see Chinatown News, 18 July 1971; and 18 October 1971, pp. 3, 53.

¹⁹³ Ng, pp. 77-79.

¹⁹⁴ Wai, pp. 24-27.

communities, which were “only a fraction of the size” of the Chinese, attended the conference. Without the designated CBA representative, Frank Chang, there was no Chinese voice in the conference. Mah asserted that this fiasco was attributed to “the lack of cohesive force in [local Chinese community] which can assume responsibility for planning and action”.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, Mah wondered whom Frank Chang would represent if he did attend the conference.¹⁹⁶ He thus was implying that the CBA was losing its mandate due to its connection with the Nationalist faction. Mah however was more explicit when he was criticizing the older generation overall as the leading political force of the Chinese community.

We've said all along that the Chinese Benevolent Association should be the focal point of the community planning and activities and the logical spokesman for our group. Unfortunately, this organization is too much dominated by the older generation who have experienced racial discrimination in the past. Having yet to rid themselves of this inferiority, they tend to turn inward and get involved with Chinese politics.¹⁹⁷

The second editorial, which appeared on May 3 of the magazine, was a disapproval on the CBA's efforts in stopping the municipal government from building a fire hall that was located too close to Chinatown. The CBA used public functions and personal connections to persuade city and provincial officials to change the fire hall's location. From Mah's view, this political strategy, which consisted of banquets and parties, was ineffective, wasteful and unethical. Mah believed that community's resource would be better spent on educating the public and politicians. He also believed that the Chinese community and

¹⁹⁵ Chinatown News, 18 March 1972, pp. 3, 56.

¹⁹⁶ Chinatown News, 18 March 1972, p. 56.

¹⁹⁷ Chinatown News, 18 March 1972, p. 56.

organizations should participate in electoral politics and grassroots movements in order to obtain their demands.¹⁹⁸ This argument was summarized in the following excerpt from his editorial.

Why not start a new ball game? Let the politicians come to us. It is far more productive to exercise our political muscles in the ballot box than in banquet halls.¹⁹⁹

The two editorials on the whole reflected conflict between the reformers and establishments in terms of community policies, political styles, and power sharing. They additionally reflected a generation gap in terms of cultural values and lifetime experiences. Roy Mah for instance argued that unlike the older generation that came from South China in the early 1900s, the native-born residents and postwar immigrants would not be deterred by racial segregation nor would they create it. The *tusheng* group in the process of acculturation and integration had expanded their social and cultural contacts beyond ethnic boundary. Their immigrant parents or grandparents on the other hand were for the most part discouraged by their experiences during the prewar, exclusion era. They thus refused to move outside of the ethnic boundary, even though many of them had become longtime settlers.

The Chinatown News as the mouthpiece of the *tusheng* leaders was more candid in its criticisms of the CBA's orthodoxy and its exclusiveness after recognition. However, Roy Mah and his like-minded peers did not want an open conflict with the elders. The tone of Mah's editorials, particularly the one written in

¹⁹⁸ Chinatown News, 3 May 1972, pp. 3, 62.

¹⁹⁹ Chinatown News 3 May 1972, p. 62.

February 1971, reflected filial reverence and ethnic loyalty. In another editorial, which appeared in the magazine in August, Mah again credited the older generation and their organizations for their visions and functions, especially in cultural retention.²⁰⁰ Mah furthermore asserted that there was a “genetic cord” that ran from the “pioneers” to their offspring. This genetic cord and common heritage of the South China immigrants and their descendents helped produce “the best in Chinese culture” in Canada.²⁰¹

Hence, the younger generation was portrayed in the magazine as being sincere and accommodating. The *tusheng* leaders also bolstered their legitimacy by reminding the rest of the Chinese community that they belonged to the community’s original core. Ng’s study has noted that the old-timers expected their descendents and the postwar newcomers to recognize their superiority in the Chinese community. After all, the old-timers experienced much hardship and racism during the prewar era, so they believed that those who came after them had an easier time in Canada. Therefore, the old-timers demanded Canadian-born and postwar immigrants to show some gratitude for their struggles.²⁰² The old-timers additionally assumed that their district and surname associations were the established order,²⁰³ and they were wary of organizations that were “Canadian-controlled”²⁰⁴ or “leftist”.

²⁰⁰ *Chinatown News*, 3 August 1971, pp. 8-11.

²⁰¹ *Chinatown News*, 3 August 1971, p. 11.

²⁰² Ng, pp. 25, 29-30, 60.

²⁰³ Ng, p. 60.

²⁰⁴ Straaton, p. 75.

As a descendent of the older generation, Mah was willing to praise the Chinatown elders and allay their fear of losing prestige and power, but he was not submissive to them. Additionally, the Chinatown News along with the mainstream media had treated the Nationalist faction as a discredited political force. Die-hard Taiwan supporters were portrayed as irrational, right-wing and arrogant. They were the embarrassment of the community. The old immigrants who supported them were portrayed as having little knowledge of the social and political realities in Mainland China as well as in places where newcomers came from.²⁰⁵ The Chinatown News would even agree with the assessments on traditional organizations made by the mainstream media, namely that these organizations were authoritarian and patriarchic and created a “geriatric tyranny”, according to a Toronto Telegram journalist, whose article on Toronto Chinatown was carried by the Chinatown News.²⁰⁶

Still, the Chinatown News tried to mediate among the contending factions in Vancouver Chinatown. As discussed earlier, the conflicts in the local Chinese community were local in origin, but they ended up as conflicts over Chinese politics. Even with the help of newspapers like the Chinatown News and Chinese Voice, the representatives for *tusheng* and newcomers were unable to significantly shift the debates on Chinese civil war and recognition into debates on Chinatown politics and culture. Thus, they could only implore to pro-Mainland and pro-Taiwan movement to moderate themselves and get over this petty squabble for sake of the community. For many months after recognition, the

²⁰⁵ See Chinatown News, 18 October 1971, p.19- 20.

²⁰⁶ Again see Chinatown News, 18 October 1971, p.18.

Chinatown News had put out commentaries that explicitly or implicitly urged reconciliation between the supporters and opponents of recognition. In December 1971, more than a year after the Sino-Canadian Communiqué, Mah wrote yet another editorial in which he pleaded to certain “elements” in the Chinese community to “banish hatred toward one another”.²⁰⁷

...Malice is a negative force which saps our strength and gnaws at the vitals of community harmony and progress. What a price we pay for fanaticism! ...Presuming that community welfare is the paramount consideration, we can at least abjure the hatred that consumes the partisan advocates, the mutual accusations that divide us and the bitterness that begets acrimony.²⁰⁸

The Chinatown News furthermore searched for signs that the recognition controversy was ending and that this event had a positive effect on the Chinese community. For instance, the magazine’s coverage of the national conference of benevolent association in June 1971 ended in a note of optimism. The dissenters from the non-partisan, Canadian-oriented group were very disappointed that the benevolent associations had adopted a strong pro-Taiwan stance. However, they had support from some prominent CBA members like Wong Foon Sien and Mah F. Sing, the president of the Mah surname association. Both Wong and Mah tried to maintain unity in the CBA, and they downplayed the significance of Chinese politics at the conference.²⁰⁹ Additionally, the Chinatown News reported that the conference had called for standardization of the benevolent associations and for

²⁰⁷ Chinatown News, 18 December, pp. 1971, 3, 74D.

²⁰⁸ Chinatown News, 18 December 1971, 3, 74D. [74D]

²⁰⁹ Chinatown News, 3 July 1971, p. 41.

more commitment to social programs for the young and old.²¹⁰ The Chinatown News also marveled at the fact that no Chinese flag was hoisted during the conference, which was held at the CBA building in Vancouver.

Could it be the majority [in the conference] was anxious to preserve harmony and tranquility in the community so it did not push the issue? If so, this was all to the good. Shows that we are maturing – via the integration process.²¹¹

The Chinatown News constantly mentioned events that showed the local Chinese community adjusting to the Canadian recognition of the PRC, no matter how minor those events were. In December 1970, the magazine reported that the Hong Men organization and Hong Hsing Athletic Association had begun to fly the PRC flag in their parades and public functions. Prior to recognition, the ROC flag was seen in all Chinatown parades.²¹² The magazine in April 1971 reported that CBA also broke with tradition by ending its sponsorship of the KMT's Youth Day Festival.²¹³ A month later, the Chinatown News carried a Montreal Star article on the Chinese students' protest against Japan's claim over the Diaoyutai islands, which are located close to Taiwan and the Mainland. This column remarked that this dispute had united overseas Chinese regardless of which of the two home governments they aligned with.²¹⁴

Another reason as to why senior *tusheng* leaders like Roy Mah reached out to the older generation of immigrants and their organizations instead of

²¹⁰ Chinatown News, 3 July 1971, p. 41.

²¹¹ Chinatown News, 3 July 1971, p. 41.

²¹² Chinatown News, 3 December 1970, pp. 58-59.

²¹³ Chinatown News, 18 April 1971, p. 44.

²¹⁴ Chinatown News, 3 May 1971, p. 40.

fighting them was that they wanted to prevent the radicals in the community from gaining influence. The senior *tusheng* leaders were well aware that the Chinese communities in North America were undergoing a transformation during the 1960s and 1970s. The physical and social changes in the Chinese communities were accompanied by intense political, cultural, and generational conflicts. The Chinatown News had editorials and articles that informed readers on the “winds of change” that were affecting the Chinatowns in major Canadian and American cities.²¹⁵ The situation in Canadian Chinatowns was relatively less volatile than in the US due to differences in political process and governmental policies on inter-ethnic relations. Additionally, the Vietnam War and pan-Asian movement had a larger influence in America’s Chinese communities, where the young Chinese activists there were more confrontational and radical.²¹⁶ In Canada, senior *tusheng* leaders and youth activists worked together more or less under the framework of multiculturalism. Some of the activists’ ideas on social and cultural programs were co-opted by the senior leaders. The Canadian government also encouraged and supported them in their political and cultural project.²¹⁷

Nonetheless the senior *tusheng* leaders in Canada were afraid that conflicts among militant youth activists, new immigrants, and old residents would get out of control. The Da Zhong Bao, for example, was a harsh critic of Roy Mah whom it perceived as another Chinatown elitist leaders.²¹⁸ There were also a few

²¹⁵ For examples, see Chinatown News, 3 February 1971, pp. 22-27; 18 February 1971, pp. 8-12; 3 August 1971, pp. 8-11; 3 October 1971, pp. 6-10; and 18 October 1971, pp. 18-21.

²¹⁶ Ng, pp. 135-136.

²¹⁷ Ng, pp. 106, 109-115.

²¹⁸ Ng, p. 111.

instances where protests against the PRC and counter-protests had turned ugly and required local police to get involved.²¹⁹ The once unpopular supporters of the PRC had become very vocal since recognition,²²⁰ and they often demonstrated against the CBA for disregarding the Canadian government by flying the ROC flag. This act according to the PRC supporters was a flagrant contradiction of the "one China" principle.²²¹ The *tusheng* leaders wanted to avoid all of these bad publicities. They treated the power struggle in Chinatown following the Canada-China ties with both hopes and fears.²²²

On the whole, the events in the Vancouver Chinese community following the Canadian recognition of the PRC signified a shift in the power structure of the community. These events also signified changes in the characteristics of the community's leadership. Before the late 1960s, people who dominated Chinatown's political scene tended to be middle-aged or elderly China-born men. According to Con and Wickberg's study, the China-born group moreover tended to join traditional or long-established organizations, such as the CBA, KMT, clan and locality associations. Their associations and networks indicated that they preferred to operate in a totally Chinese environment. Top organizational or community leaders drawn from the China-born group often acted as internal leaders and required intermediaries to communicate with the mainstream.²²³ In terms of socioeconomic background, the China-born group was involved in

²¹⁹ For examples see Chinatown News, 18 January 1971, pp. 68-69; 18 February 1971, p.55; 18 September 1971, pp. 52-53; and 3 October 1971, pp. 46-47.

²²⁰ See Chinatown News, 3 March 1971, p. 52.

²²¹ Chinatown News, 3 March 1971, p. 53

²²² Again see Chinatown News, 3 March 1971, p. 52.

²²³ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 238-241.

business enterprises that dealt with Chinese goods, services, and clientele. Straaton notes that those who assumed active leadership positions in Chinatown would maintain widespread contacts with other Chinese, even though their occupations did not require extensive contacts.²²⁴ Straaton's study also finds that there was some overlap between political and mercantile leadership, but they became distinct from each other by the 1960s.²²⁵ In terms of attitude, the China-born group for most part was unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the mainstream Canadian culture. Their political and cultural activities were therefore China-oriented.²²⁶

The China-born group formed a powerful oligarchy by creating a nexus among the CBA, KMT, and traditional organizations. The prominent members of the CBA tended to be affiliated with the KMT as well as being active in locality and surname associations. Some leaders also held important positions in Chinese schools and newspapers next to their roles in formal associations.²²⁷ The KMT appointed a few "leaders" for the community, who could be party cadres or bureaucrats from Taiwan.²²⁸ However, Straaton's analysis of China-born leaders, derived from an informal survey, showed that the number of leaders who were formal KMT member was low. Moreover, the members of the Hong Men organization, which was another influential organization for the China-born, would never associate themselves with the KMT given the historical

²²⁴ Straaton, pp. 120-123.

²²⁵ Straaton, p. 109.

²²⁶ Wickberg, ed., *From China to Canada*, pp. 238-241.

²²⁷ Straaton, pp. 125-129.

²²⁸ Straaton, pp. 127-129. Also see Ng, 85-86; and Con & Wickberg, pp. 227-228.

animosity between the two parties. The KMT was unappealing to the new immigrants and Canadian-born in the postwar period as well. Hence, the steadfast Nationalist faction that had controlled the CBA was probably composed of longtime settlers.²²⁹ In general, KMT influence or “reputation of influence” mainly came from the status of the ROC before recognition and its alliance with the CBA.²³⁰ The CBA-KMT alliance had political and financial support from the community because the older generation and traditional organizations were hostile towards the communist regime in Mainland China.²³¹

The CBA-KMT alliance should not be confused with the merchant leadership in the Vancouver Chinese community from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. The merchant leaders at the turn of the 20th century also exercised their power through the CBA, which in that period was entirely under their control.²³² The merchants mainly came from Guangdong province and engaged in the import of goods and laborers from China. Some of them also worked as bankers. According to studies by Straaton and Timothy Stanley, these merchants maintained a rigid status distinction between them and working class Chinese. They were very wealthy and were the only migrants who could afford to bring families to Canada, in contrast to with bachelor Chinese workers. The merchants thus thought of themselves as the patriarchs and sole spokespeople of the Chinese community.²³³ In terms of politics, the merchants used to support a

²²⁹ Straaton, pp. 128-129. Also see Ng, p. 79.

²³⁰ Straaton, p. 128.

²³¹ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 227-228. Also see Lum, pp. 236-237.

²³² Straaton, pp. 106-108.

²³³ Straaton, pp. 106-108. Also see Stanley, pp. 489-493.

political movement known as the Chinese Empire Reform Association or “Bao Huang Hui” (保皇會), which advocated a constitutional monarchy for China. They also fostered close ties with the Qing government before its collapse. Like other migrants before and after them, the merchants were involved in Chinese politics because they believed that a strong home government would improve their conditions in Canada. The Chinese community at that time was threatened constantly by popular and institutional racism from Anglo-Canadian establishments.²³⁴

The KMT-CBA alliance was developed during 1910s, when the KMT became the mainstream in Chinese politics. The movement for constitutional monarchy in China became unappealing as the Republic government slowly expanded and entrenched its authority, starting with the collapse of the Qing in 1911. From 1916 to 1918, the KMT mobilized the Vancouver Chinese community to demand a restructuring of the CBA via an election. As result, the KMT managed to put many of its supporters from the locality associations into the CBA's executive positions, and the merchants lost much of their influence.²³⁵ Since then, the important criteria for leadership in the local Chinese community had been political affiliation (to the Chinese Nationalists) and community service. Commerce and financial standing on the other hand became less important.²³⁶ The mercantile elements remained in community politics by establishing a formal chamber of commerce called the Chinese Merchants Association in 1929. The

²³⁴ Stanley, pp. 484-487. Also see Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 73-77, 101.

²³⁵ Straaton, pp. 107-108.

²³⁶ Straaton, pp. 108-109. Also see Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 104-109.

organization was relatively insignificant until 1957, when Canadian-born Chinese professionals and businesspeople replaced the usual import-export traders as its leaders. The executive of the revamped chamber, for instance, was composed of members from the Chinatown Lions Club.²³⁷

The Canadian recognition of the PRC started another movement to realign the political and social hierarchy of the Vancouver Chinese community. Aging, outnumbered and discredited, the people behind the CBA-KMT alliance were now the establishment that faced demands for broader representation and electoral reforms.²³⁸ The debates related to recognition and struggles in the CBA moreover reflected the emergence and politicization of the upper and middle class Chinese.

This group is composed of Canadian-born as well as immigrants from Hong Kong. Most Hong Kong immigrants came to Canada at the start of 1967, when the Canadian government introduced the point system that assessed Chinese immigrants on the same basis as all other immigrants. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the Mainland in the 1960s also had created pressures for Hong Kong residents to emigrate. The Hong Kong immigrants who came to Canada during the 1960s were urban residents who were well-educated, bilingual and highly skilled. They were different from the immigrants who arrived here from rural South China between 1947 and 1967. Rural immigrants were either sponsored by the families in Canada, or they were refugees. The new

²³⁷ Ng, pp. 52-53.

²³⁸ Ng, p. 60.

immigrants were also different from the migrant laborers who came to Canada in the 1800s and early 1900s. These laborers too were mainly from the rural area.

According to Straaton, the rural migrants were usually traditional in orientation and not easily accustomed to the host society. The Hong Kong migrants in comparison were quick to adapt to the host society and occupied white collar jobs. However, the professional status of the Chinese immigrants varied greatly since the postwar period, and many were in blue collar and service occupations. Similar to the second and third generation Chinese residents, the middle class migrants lived in suburbs with their families. In terms of attitude, they did not wish to be stereotyped as unassimilated Chinese and did not see Chinatown with its traditional organizations as the sole political and cultural focal point. Eventually the new immigrants would create their own organizations to help each other adjust to the Canadian environment, though this development was not immediately apparent following recognition.²³⁹

Secondary studies do not reveal much about the interaction between the Canadian-born and postwar immigrants.²⁴⁰ Nevertheless, both the *tusheng* leaders and representatives of middle class immigrants shared similar backgrounds and concerns about their community. Ng's study additionally finds that the new immigrant youths became the "severest internal critics of the

²³⁹ For a brief background on Chinese immigration to Canada between 1947 and 1967, Hong Kong immigrants since 1960s, and middle class Chinese-Canadians in the contemporary period, see Straaton, pp. 43-44; Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 244-252; and Ng, pp. 120-123.

²⁴⁰ Straaton, pp. 43-44. Straaton however notes that some Canadian-born residents had married recent arrivals.

existing Chinese minority."²⁴¹ They resented being dependent on the older settlers, whom they perceived as too authoritarian and culturally backward. They also disliked the "perceived confinement to the ethnic labor market, which offered low salaries and poor prospects."²⁴²

The Canadian-born and new immigrants moreover wanted recognition from the mainstream that regarded the Chinese political leadership as being homogenous even as the community had grown and diversified rapidly in the 1960s-1970s period.²⁴³ The Chinatown News was instrumental in covering and promoting the causes and activities of the *tusheng* and new immigrants. However, following the Canadian recognition of the PRC, the magazine supported the Canadian-born group that Roy Mah belonged to. The magazine constantly reminded its readers that those who were neutral in Chinatown politics and focused on community affairs were young and/or Canadian-born (as Roy Mah's editorials had contended). Additionally, the Chinatown News had reported instances where the businesses and professional sectors were alienated by the CBA's anachronistic position on Chinese politics.²⁴⁴ The Canadian-born group took another important step in asserting itself in the mainstream and Chinese community by planning and building a new community center in the early 1970s. In this instance, the *tusheng* leaders and activists had created a common front

²⁴¹ Ng, p. 29.

²⁴² Ng, p. 29.

²⁴³ Straaton, pp. 106-109

²⁴⁴ For an example, see Chinatown News, 18 June 1971, p. 51.

with China-born and non-Chinese residents without any help from the KMT-CBA, which later vehemently opposed this project by building a competing center.²⁴⁵

All these events showed the political and cultural maturation of the Canadian-born group. They capitalized on the fluid situation in Chinatown brought about by the Canada-China ties as well as other catalytic events, such as multiculturalism and Vancouver's urban renewal project. The Canadian-born representatives used their mastery of English, socioeconomic resources, and contacts outside of local ethnic community to their fullest advantage. They wrested control of the Vancouver Chinese community's destiny and image away from not only local authority but also from the established order within the Chinese community.

The Canadian-born group moreover saw the Canadian recognition of the PRC as a chance to assert their own heritage and cultural identity, which was "Chinese-Canadian" rather than totally Chinese or Canadian. The Chinatown News early on interpreted the controversy surrounding recognition as not merely the result of partisan ideologies and generation gap but as a debate about identity. The Chinatown News since recognition started to openly suggest that the Chinese community in Canada was diverse and not an "ethnic monolith".²⁴⁶

The Chinatown News' editorials on multiculturalism and integration had shown that *tusheng* and highly acculturated Chinese residents like Roy Mah disliked the "sojourner mentality" and overseas Chinese identity. In order to

²⁴⁵ Ng, pp. 111, 115-116.

²⁴⁶ Chinatown News, 3 March 1971, p. 53.

explain this issue, the research project must first provide an account on the development of the Chinese sojourner.

The sojourner mentality in general was based on the belief that emigrant Chinese would return to their native places once they had made fortunes in foreign lands. The sojourner mentality originated at the turn of the 20th century, when most Chinese migrants coming to North America were bachelors and manual laborers. For cultural, personal and environmental reasons, the migrant workers were not ready to permanently leave their native places and settle in foreign lands. Their main goal therefore was to achieve prosperity and remit their wealth back to their families in China. If they were successful in their ventures, the sojourners would be able to make repeated trips back to China and later retire comfortably in their native places. Moreover, the sojourners tried to retain as much of their cultural traditions as they could in the host country and interacted mainly with other Chinese.²⁴⁷

However, there were many exceptions to the ideal or stereotypical sojourners. Con and Wickberg have noted that some early Chinese migrants, depending on their socioeconomic status, had chosen to settle and integrate in the Canadian environment. As mentioned before, wealthy Chinese merchants often had families in Canada. The host society's treatment of the Chinese migrants was also a factor in the process of acculturation and integration. The Chinese migrants in prewar era were virtually barred from participating in political and socioeconomic activities in the mainstream society. In terms of occupations,

²⁴⁷ For definitions on the sojourner identity, see Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 6, 80-80; and Straaton, p. 43.

they were not permitted to move beyond their niches designated by the Anglo-Canadian establishment. Popular hostility in the forms of media stereotypes and race riots additionally made Chinese migrants minimize their contact with the non-Chinese.²⁴⁸ Straaton also asserts that most sojourners, due to various circumstances in Canada and China, rarely achieved their goal of retiring to their native places.²⁴⁹ They instead remained as transients in Chinatowns. Some integrated to the Canadian society.

The overseas Chinese identity was derived from the sojourner mentality and its associate institutions. The development of the remittance communication network created additional expectations and imagination of national and ethnic identity for Chinese living abroad and in their native places. Madeline Hsu's study on Toi-san County, which was a major emigrant center in Guangdong at the turn of the 20th century, reveals that news publications for emigrants had produced a culture of nostalgia and community.²⁵⁰ Hsu's study also finds that the remittance system instilled a sense of obligation and inspiration into the migrants. Besides providing for their relatives, the migrants had to contribute to their native districts

²⁴⁸ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 80-81. Con and Wickberg's study overall had documented many instances of media stereotypes, violent racist outbursts, and institutional racism in prewar era (before World War II). For a detailed study on the racial discourse on Chinese immigrants and Chinatown in Vancouver, see Kay J. Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

²⁴⁹ Straaton, p. 43.

²⁵⁰ Hsu, pp. 308-310, 312-322. The Mandarin pronunciation for Toi-san is Taishan (台山). Note that the Vancouver Chinese community in the late 1800s and early 1900s had sizable population from Toi-san as well as an active Toi-san locality association. Wong Foon Sien for example was a member from the Toi-san Association besides being a member of the Chinese Workers Association, both of which were "neutral" in Chinese politics. See Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 112-113, 223. The first few waves of Chinese immigrants to Canada were from the Siyi, Sanyi, and Zhongshan area, which were located on the coast of the Guangdong Province. Toi-san County was a part of the Siyi area. See Ng, pp. 14-15.

as well. The emigrant communities during this period believed that the migrants going to the “Gold Mountain” would bring back capital and knowledge to develop the home villages or towns. They were the agents of modernity and progress.²⁵¹

Successive Chinese governments in the early 1900s recognized the political and economic potentials of the overseas migrants, who had responded to calls to aid their native places. The central government in the late Qing and early Republican government had attempted to transform native place loyalty to patriotism.²⁵² Emigration, which the central government had forbidden until 1893, was now appreciated as an achievement. There was also a dramatic improvement in the status of migrants within the Chinese political and cultural context. Once labeled as rebels and criminals, they were now overseas Chinese nationals or “*huaqiao*” (華僑).²⁵³ Furthermore, all Chinese living abroad became Chinese citizens with the implementation of the 1909 nationality law, which was based on the principle of *jus sanguinis*.²⁵⁴ Hence, the Chinese government was responsible for the overseas Chinese. The migrants in turn were obligated to participate in the building and defense of China. For the first half of the 20th century, the overseas Chinese in North America responded enthusiastically to the Chinese government’s appeals for political and economic support.

There were several factors behind the surge of the overseas Chinese nationalism and patriotism. Firstly, China was encountering many severe crises.

²⁵¹ Hsu, pp. 308-310.

²⁵² Hsu, pp. 324-326.

²⁵³ Wang, From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy, pp. 43-48, 65-77.

²⁵⁴ Pan, p. 206. The Nationalist government continued to enforce the nationality law after 1949.

The war with Japan from 1937 to 1945, for instance, had made the overseas Chinese fervently committed to the KMT and nationalist cause.²⁵⁵ Secondly, Chinese immigrants in North America chose to be sojourners and *huaqiao* as a reaction to their hardship and humiliation. Madeline Hsu points out that being loyal to China and Chinese organizations reinforced the image of Chinese migrants as inassimilable foreigners. Nonetheless, the extreme anti-Oriental racism in North America before the mid-1900s prevented immigrants from having attachments to their respective host countries.²⁵⁶ Being "overseas Chinese" was preferable to being "second class citizens" or "undesirable aliens". When the Chinese Communists won the civil war in 1949, the nationalistic overseas Chinese took on the attitude of refugees.²⁵⁷

The politically active Canadian-born Chinese in the 1970s opposed the sojourner and *huaqiao* identity. The belief that immigrants and their descendants could resettle in their native places had become impractical given the developments in China and in Canada. Moreover, the Canadian-born group in the postwar era had lost the linkages that had connected their parents or grandparents to their native places, such as the remittance network and Chinese-language publications. The descendants of the early immigrants (especially the second generation) had attended Chinese schools and joined traditional

²⁵⁵ Hsu, pp. 324-326. Also see Wang, *From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy*, pp. 73-74; and Ng, p. 17.

²⁵⁶ Hsu, pp. 322-324.

²⁵⁷ *Chinatown News*, 18 October 1971, p. 19.

organizations. However, the *tusheng* did not share the transient, refugee and victim mentality of the older, China-born generation.²⁵⁸

The Canadian-born group furthermore realized that the older generation and Chinatown establishment had a monopoly over the definition of the overseas Chinese identity and culture. The sojourner and *huaqiao* identity denoted particular social and political values. A so-called good overseas Chinese, for instance, had to be respectful towards the patriarchs in Chinatown and support the Nationalist cause. Those who did not subscribe to those values could be considered as having lost their culture or being influenced by leftist ideology. "We have our own true Chinese culture here," Lam Fong said in response to the recognition of the PRC, "we teach the old way of respect to parents and we do not want to be infiltrated by communists."²⁵⁹ As long as the elderly, China-born leaders in the CBA-KMT alliance had authority over cultural authenticity, they controlled much of the community's agenda.

The Canadian-born group wanted to break this monopoly of political and cultural discourse in the Chinese community. They knew that the Chinatown establishments perpetuated the sojourner and *huaqiao* culture for their interests and to silence any challenge to their authority. The Canadian-born also did not want to be marginalized and feel guilty because of their origin and their lack of first-hand experiences with the Chinese society (be it from Hong Kong, Taiwan, or the Mainland). They especially resented the guilt-trip charge that they had

²⁵⁸ For instance, see *Chinatown News*' editorial on CBA's absence in the multicultural conference in March 1972. *Chinatown News*, 18 March 1972, pp. 3, 56.

²⁵⁹ *Chinatown News*, 18 October 1970, p. 8

abandoned their culture and community. After all, their immigrant parents and grandparents had encouraged them to be successful in the mainstream by getting a “Western” education and obtaining jobs in professional and business sectors. When the *tusheng* elements had matured and tried to give back to the community, they found that the Chinatown elders resisted their proposals and castigated them as being corrupted by Western culture.²⁶⁰

The Canadian-born group in the postwar period tried to pluralize the definition of Chinese in order to resolve their identity crisis and the cultural ambivalence in their ethnic community. They introduced a hyphenated “Chinese-Canadian” in place of the sojourner identity. On the surface, the term Chinese-Canadian referred to Canadian citizens of Chinese ancestry or “race”. On a deeper level, the heritage and values of the Chinese-Canadians were rooted in Canada, which was their home country. The Chinese-Canadian history would be about struggles of the immigrants and their descendents to be included in the Canadian community. This history would also show the contributions of the Chinese residents to the building of Canada as a country and a nation. While Chinese-Canadians acknowledged the cultural influence of their ancestral country and their ethnic (or racial) characteristics, they downplayed the historical connection between the Chinese-Canadian communities and China. From the perspective of the Canadian-born, China was too remote to be meaningful.

²⁶⁰ Ng. pp. 53, 106.

Overall, being Chinese-Canadian meant that one was neither an inassimilable alien nor completely assimilated Canadian.²⁶¹

The Canadian-born group introduced their version of Chinese-Canadian identity to give them advantages in the political and cultural debates in their community, in which the immigrant discourse prevailed. The Canadian government's multicultural ideology further complemented and legitimized this hyphenated identity. The Canadian-born leaders would later try to make the Chinese-Canadian identity and culture dominant in their community because it privileged them.²⁶²

The Chinatown News was in the forefront in the promotion of the Chinese-Canadian identity in Vancouver. Roy Mah was concerned that the history of Chinese communities in Canada had not been documented and commemorated. Articles in the Chinatown News therefore presented an official narration of Chinese in Canada. For instance, the magazine devoted an entire edition to the Chinese-Canadian history in July 1971, when British Columbia celebrated its centenary of joining the Canadian Confederation. Roy Mah contended that the ethnic Chinese had made impressive achievements and progress in Canada. His examples were in particular concentrated on the second generation who excelled in the professional sector as well as being active in mainstream politics. Mah also portrayed Chinese immigrants as heroic and adventurous pioneers in this

²⁶¹ For more on the development of the Chinese-Canadian identity as an overarching label for ethnic Chinese see Ng, pp. 103-106, 115, 117-120.

²⁶² Ng, p. 106.

country.²⁶³ Unlike other Chinese-language publications, such as the Chinese Times, the Chinatown News celebrated the role of Chinese-Canadians in Canada instead of their role in the Old World, where the immigrants escaped from. The magazine emphasized the hardship as well as the successes in the adaptation to the Canadian society without the guilt pertaining to losing cultural identity.

The *tusheng* leaders saw the Canadian recognition of the PRC as a key event that allowed them to formally assert the Chinese-Canadian identity and attack the overseas Chinese or sojourner identity. Paradoxically, the *tusheng* leaders drew upon the PRC's policy towards the overseas Chinese even though they vowed to distance themselves from the Chinese government. Generally, the PRC government had minimal contact with the overseas Chinese communities. The people who favored the recognition in the Chinese-Canadian communities had little do to with the Chinese Communists or Marxist ideology. They were mainly motivated by ethnic or national pride.²⁶⁴ Janet Lum found that other than some public relations events like Chinese opera tour, freighter visits and pro-Mao Zedong rallies, the PRC and its media were silent on the affairs of the Chinese-Canadian communities.²⁶⁵

Beijing's inactivity before recognition was in stark contrast to Taipei's lobbying of the overseas Chinese communities, and for this reason the Canadian-born group welcomed the diplomatic exchange between their country

²⁶³ See Chinatown News, 18 July 1971.

²⁶⁴ Straaton, p. 44.

²⁶⁵ Lum, pp. 219-220, 223-224.

and the PRC. Roy Mah especially seized the opportunity to tell the local Chinese community that they should go along with the PRC's *laissez faire* policy on the overseas Chinese because the PRC was now the official Chinese government. Mah's argument, which appeared in a Chinatown News editorial in October 1971, was based on a statement made by the Chinese premier Chou En-lai in his address to a Malaysian-Chinese trade delegation. Premier Chou was quoted as having said to the trade delegation that the "overseas Chinese should not regard China as their mother country anymore," and instead they "must be loyal to the countries in which they live."²⁶⁶ Mah praised Premier Chou's statement, asserting it had positive and "sweeping" implications for Canada's Chinese residents. This event, which followed recognition, was a clear sign for the local Chinese community to take up the Chinese-Canadian identity and abandon the sojourner identity. It was also a sign to separate Chinese culture from Chinese politics. As Mah had put it in his editorial on Premier Chou:

...[Those] belonging to the second and third generation of local born, they have long regarded themselves as fully integrated Canadians even though they are still fighting for greater recognition of their linguistic and cultural rights. They are not unmindful of the fact that their forefathers came to this country as early settlers... The descendents of these pioneers consider themselves as much a part of the Canadian scene as the Laurentians are in the East and the Rockies in the West.

This is not to say that Chinese Canadians are not proud of their racial identity. They realize that there is a positive value in the retention of the traditions and a heritage rooted in 4000 years of history and culture.

But political ties are a horse of a different color. Any attempt to woo [Chinese Canadians'] allegiance or influence their loyalty

²⁶⁶ Chinatown News, 3 October 1971, p. 3.

would be an exercise in futility... Fact is most Chinese Canadians are several generations removed from their ancestral land.²⁶⁷

This excerpt shows that Roy Mah promoted the Chinese-Canadian identity as being sanctioned by both the Canadian and Chinese government. The excerpt also shows that the *tusheng* leaders were positioning themselves as the political and cultural leaders in their community. They were now the ones that were defining “Chinese-ness”, which denoted the status of an ethnic minority rather than a nationality. Mah’s editorial reinforced an earlier contention by another *tusheng* leader, Reverend Andrew Lam, that there was no conflict between being good Canadian citizen and having ethnic pride.²⁶⁸ In fact, Mah implied that Chinese-Canadians, who expanded their linguistic and cultural rights in the multicultural and pluralistic context, were really passionate Canadian nationalists. The editorial also sought to discredit Lam Fong's claim that recognition had led to communist infiltration in the local Chinese community.

On the whole, the response of the Chinatown News to the Canadian recognition of the PRC was generally positive. The view of the magazine on this subject was shaped by the politically active *tusheng*, who exploited the momentum of recognition to demand a share of the political and cultural space in the Vancouver Chinese community. In conjunction with other factors like urban renewal in Chinatown area and the Canadian government’s promotion of multiculturalism, the Canada-PRC ties justified their leadership and agenda.

²⁶⁷ Chinatown News, 3 October 1971, pp. 3, 58.

²⁶⁸ Ng, pp. 104-105.

They also challenged the older, China-born leaders, who depended on the ROC government for their legitimacy.

The Canadian recognition of the PRC furthermore gave a chance for the Canadian-born group to publicly assert their distinct ethnic identity. They felt that recognition should end the partisan politics and cultural ambivalence associated with being a Chinese. The event also vindicated their belief that they were permanent Canadian citizens, not transient Chinese nationals. The Chinatown News, for instance, was closely aligned with the English-language newspapers in its coverage of the Canada-China ties. This alignment was a glaring manifestation of the second and third generation Chinese-Canadians' integration to the mainstream. The *tusheng* leaders moreover perceived that recognition had produced feelings of ethnic pride and optimism in their community, particularly within the younger generation. They thus tried to use this momentum to end the KMT supporters' hegemony over cultural and political discourse. The invocation of cultural pride and the more ambiguous "racial pride" by Roy Mah was to capture the attention of the Chinese-Canadian youths, who would help him to promote his political and cultural agenda. The Chinese racial reference was a compensation to the Canadian-born group's supposed deficiency in traditional values and authentic cultural experiences. On the whole, the Canadian recognition of the PRC had a positive influence on the Canadian-born Chinese's search for their identity.

However, there was no consensus in the Vancouver Chinese community on Chinese politics and its relevance. Conflicts among partisans regularly flared

up after October 1970, no matter how hard the Chinatown News tried to play down these incidents or spin them in a positive manner. By early 1971, the magazine reported that the power struggle between the PRC and ROC supporters had “reached a windy proportion”.²⁶⁹ Even Grey Cup football, which Roy Mah touted as an indication of Chinese-Canadians’ transcendence from Chinese politics, was dragged into the partisan dispute in Chinatown. The Grey Cup parade was held at Vancouver in December 1971, and one of the entries in the parade was the lion dance performed by students of the Chinese Public School. A journalist from Globe and Mail reported that a quarrel erupted between the PRC and ROC supporters over which Chinese flag should the standard bearers carry. The Chinatown News, which picked up this story, asserted that the dispute was exaggerated and the Globe and Mail journalist was “elaborating the truth”. The “consensus” according to the Chinatown News was that students from the Chinese Public School were free to fly the ROC flag if they chose to.²⁷⁰

Nonetheless, the pressure to acknowledge the Canadian recognition of the PRC increased over time, and the polarization within the local Chinese community and its organizations became very intense. With the death of Wong Foon Sien on 31 July 1971 (shortly after the CBA’s national conference),²⁷¹ the split between the Nationalist faction and reformers within the organization turned irreconcilable. Lacking charismatic representatives, the CBA further weakened

²⁶⁹ Chinatown News, 3 March 1971, p. 52.

²⁷⁰ Chinatown News, 3 December 1971, p. 47.

²⁷¹ See Chinatown News, 3 August, 1971.

and isolated itself by its withdrawal from community affairs and its steadfast commitment to the Nationalist cause.

Ultimately, *tusheng* leaders like Roy Mah could not identify with the conservative elders, whom they perceived as paranoid and stubborn. The *tusheng* leaders instead competed against the elders in leading the Vancouver Chinese community. The Vancouver Chinese Cultural Center, which was a rival to the CBA, was completed in 1976. Two years later, the people from the Chinese Cultural Center forced an election in the CBA and expelled the KMT supporters, who were no longer considered part of the Chinese-Canadian community. The mainstream media also labeled them as “Taiwanese”.²⁷²

²⁷² Ng, pp. 115-116. Also see Wai, pp. 24-27.

4. The Perspective of the Chinese Times on Recognition

4.1 The Newspaper War and Its Effects on the Unity and Representation of The Hong Men Society

The Vancouver branch of the Hong Men Society and its newspaper, the Chinese Times, appeared neutral towards Ottawa's decision to recognize the PRC. However, the Hong Men organization had been very opinionated on Chinese politics and history. The Hong Men leaders were especially concerned about the status, ideological principles, and history of their home government. They were also picky about the name of their country. While the Hong Men's Chinese Times commented little on recognition, the newspaper for a while was very adamant that the ROC was the home country or state for the Hong Men organization as well as the rest of the Chinese-Canadian community. The Chinese Times' position, which on occasion was very ambiguous, had a lot to do with the structural, cultural and historical development of the Vancouver Hong Men organization.

When Canada and the PRC established formal diplomatic ties in October 1970, the representatives from the Vancouver Hon Meng organization claimed that they and other members were unconcerned about the event. By the end of 1970, the Hong Men accepted the PRC as the official Chinese government, and it started to adopt the PRC flag and logo, as indicated in the Chinatown News.

The Chinese Times, however, reported that the symbolic changes occurred mainly in branch organizations in the eastern Canada.²⁷³ In early 1971, the president of the Vancouver branch, Harry Con, and the editor of the Chinese Times, Chan Mun Bun, publicly stated that their organization engaged neither in Chinese nor Canadian politics. They further claimed that the goal of the Hong Men was to help people in the local Chinese community.²⁷⁴ Naturally, their statement was encouraging for the Canadian-born leaders like Roy Mah.

However, the Chinese Times editorialized at length about the ROC being the legitimate home state of the overseas Chinese before and during the process in which Canada recognized the PRC. The newspaper also denounced those in the Hong Men organization who deviated from this stance as well as the pro-PRC faction in the local Chinese community. In the few months leading up to the Sino-Canadian Communiqué, the Chinese Times was embroiled a war of words with the Da Zhong Bao. Both presses mutually accused each other of being unpatriotic. Overall, the coverage of recognition by the Chinese Times, particularly before the recognition, showed that the Vancouver Hong Men organization had a complex, contradictory, and unrealistic position on Chinese politics.

The position of the Hong Men Society and its political wing, Minzhidang, had been discussed earlier in this research project. From the end of the Chinese civil war to the Sino-Canadian Communiqué, the Hong Men claimed that it was

²⁷³ See Chinatown News, 3 December 1970, pp. 58-59; and Chinese Times, 20 November 1970, p. 8.

²⁷⁴ Chinatown News, 3 March 1971, p. 53.

an independent patriotic movement that swore allegiance to the Chinese Republic and Sun Yat-sen's The Three People's Principles, which were democracy, nationalism, and livelihood of the people (or social welfare). The Hong Men was loyal to the ROC (or the ideal of the early Republic), but it opposed the warring Nationalist and Communist regimes on the ground that "the Hong Men and dictatorship cannot coexist" (洪門專制是不兩立的).²⁷⁵ Additionally, the Hong Men as a broad and populist coalition of overseas Chinese preferred the middle-of-the-road approach to political issues, such as the modernization of China. They therefore disapproved the rhetoric and policies of the Communist and Nationalist regime.

The Hong Men Society in Canada opposed negotiation between Canada and the PRC in the 1960s. Though it did not openly criticize the Canadian government's policy, it disapproved of any action that could discredit or legitimize the ROC. For longtime members of the Hong Men Society and proud Han-Chinese, the PRC with its communist system was the worst alternative to the ROC. The KMT government in Taiwan at least rallied behind Sun Yat-sen's doctrine and Chinese traditions. Furthermore, the Hong Men was part of the CBA establishment. Hence, the Hong Men members were taught to accept the ROC flag, symbols, and associated values. When recognition was impending, the leaders of the Hong Men enforced the organization's stance on Chinese politics. They expected members to not support the PRC or the Canadian government's

²⁷⁵ This slogan appeared regularly in the Chinese Times. For an example, see Chinese Times, 15 July 1970, p. 3.

China policy before a formal treaty between the two countries was made.

Renegade members or branch organizations opposing the official doctrine and regulations faced expulsion. The Hong Men additionally made its position known through the Chinese Times. The newspaper appealed to the Chinese community not to abandon their sentimental tie to the ROC. Like the mouthpieces for the Nationalist faction, the Chinese Times also warned the Chinese community not to give in to communist agents and rebellious youths.

Nonetheless, the Chinese Times' coverage of recognition showed that the Hong Men Society was internally divided on this issue by 1970. The Toronto branch was openly sympathetic towards the PRC and threatened to withdraw from the national body. The Vancouver branch faced challenges from a few of its members who welcomed the changes in the Canada-China relations. The Chinese Times, which was mainly under the control of the Vancouver lodge, repeatedly called for the national body to disown the "traitorous" members and branch organizations. The Vancouver branch was more hostile towards the PRC than other branches, and it did not abandon its awkward independent position on Chinese politics until October 1970.

The Chinese Times began to formulate its position on the Canadian recognition of the PRC and Chinese politics during its newspaper war with the Da Zhong Bao. The exact origin of the war among the ethnic presses in the Vancouver Chinese community in 1970 was relatively unknown. According to Ng, the Da Zhong Bao started the war in January with a report on the secret sale of the ROC consulate-general's official residence in the exclusive Shaughnessy

area of Vancouver. The sale of the consulate-general's residence indicated that the Canadian government was switching diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the Mainland. The Da Zhong Bao thus saw this event as a victory for the pro-PRC faction in Chinatown. It then proceeded to castigate other Chinese newspapers for trying to cover up this so-called scandal.²⁷⁶

A few months later, the Da Zhong Bao directed its attack against the Chinese Times, criticizing it for not acknowledging the PRC's achievements and not accepting the imminent Sino-Canadian rapprochement. The Da Zhong Bao always carried articles that celebrated the PRC's socioeconomic progress, military might, technological advances, sport games victories, diplomatic victories, and so on. For example, the Da Zhong Bao was very excited when the PRC tested its first hydrogen bomb in 1967 and began its satellite/missile project in the early 1970s.²⁷⁷ In comparison with the Nationalist regime, which had an abysmal record of corruption, tyranny, and weakness (in terms of foreign policy), the Communist regime appeared strong, non-traditional, and anti-imperialistic.²⁷⁸ The left-leaning youth activists in the local Chinese community therefore identified the PRC as the true representative of China and the Chinese. The Da Zhong Bao regarded those who made Taiwan their home state as self-hating, unpatriotic Chinese.²⁷⁹ Likewise, it condemned those who made Hong Kong their native place as having a colonial mentality, and similar attacks were leveled against the

²⁷⁶ Ng, pp. 87-88.

²⁷⁷ Ng, p. 160. Also see Chinese Times, 5-8 October 1970, p. 3.

²⁷⁸ Ng, p. 90.

²⁷⁹ Ng, pp. 87-88.

Hong Kong immigrants as well.²⁸⁰ When Taipei supported the suppression of riots in Hong Kong in 1967 by the British colonial government, the Da Zhong Bao called the Nationalists “the degenerates [or scum] of the Chinese nation” (民族敗類).²⁸¹

Though the Da Zhong Bao seemed just as patriotic and nationalistic as other news presses dedicated to overseas Chinese, its strategy of defaming and insulting its supposed adversaries in Chinatown to gain publicity had long irritated many organizations and groups. As mentioned earlier, even the reformist Chinatown News was angered by the Da Zhong Bao's radicalism and its demand for local Chinese residents to support the PRC. The Hong Men organization and the Chinese Times were equally furious when the Da Zhong Bao started to attack them in the summer of 1970. The Da Zhong Bao seized the opportunity of the Sino-Canadian rapprochement to criticize the Hong Men's hypocrisy in its continuing support to the ROC while proclaiming itself independent. The Da Zhong Bao called the Hong Men's position “phony neutrality” (假中立), “phony patriotism” (假愛國), “against the Chinese people” (反華, 反人民), and so on. It also accused Hong Men lacking “ethnic and national pride” (民族尊嚴).²⁸²

Naturally, the Hong Men responded in kind against the Da Zhong Bao by using the Chinese Times to throw equally vicious rhetoric. More than once, the

²⁸⁰ Ng, pp. 92.

²⁸¹ Ng, p. 160.

²⁸² Ng, pp. 87-88.

Chinese Times blamed the Da Zhong Bao of making irresponsible and extremist comments that aimed to divide the local Chinese community.²⁸³ The Vancouver branch of the Hong Men Society moreover was quite disturbed by the fact that the pro-PRC dissidents in their organization used the Da Zhong Bao to voice their opinions. The issue of recognition aside, the Hong Men leaders saw the collaboration between the dissidents and Da Zhong Bao as a direct challenge against their authority. This collaboration also proved to the older, conservative members that there was a sinister plot by the communists to takeover or destroy the organization. Hence, the Hong Men leaders perceived that they were not merely debating Chinese politics amongst their members, but they were really fighting for the survival of their organization.

The newspaper war between Chinese Times and Da Zhong Bao intensified from July to October 1970, when both sides attacked each other almost on a daily basis.²⁸⁴ A letter that appeared in the Chinese Times on July 4 was a typical example of the responses from the Hong Men members to Da Zhong Bao's attacks. This letter, which was written by a self-proclaimed Hong Men member, claimed that "a tiny group of leftists and communist bandits" (一小撮左仔土共) were intimidating and smearing those in the Chinese community who disliked the Chinese Communists. The author, who went by the pseudonym "The White Cloth of Hong Men" (洪門白衣), called the leftists' tactics childish,

²⁸³ For instance, see Chinese Times, 6 July 1970, p. 3.

²⁸⁴ Ng, pp. 87-88. Also see the editorials and letters appeared in the Chinese Times during this period.

ignorant and hypocritical.²⁸⁵ He further castigated his opponents as being neither good overseas Chinese nor good Canadian citizens, as the following excerpt shows:

...You [referring to the leftists] say that Mao Zedong's communist regime in Mainland China is a democracy. If this was true, then why would you not allow us [referring to the Hong Men supporters] to criticize Mao Zedong and his tyranny? Where is the democracy in that? It is a waste that you live Canada, where it is democratic and free. Are you not familiar with the concept called the freedom of speech? You are like frogs living and croaking at the bottom of a well and cannot see the daylight. Do you not know English and not read Western newspapers? Can you not see that the Canadian people often criticize their government and their prime minister? The opposition party criticizes the governing party daily. When have we ever heard that the Canadian government and governing party are accusing their critics of being anti-government, anti-Canada and anti-Canadian?

Today we want the peaceful unification of the ancestral country [referring to the future unification of Taiwan and Mainland China], where people can live in freedom. We also want the overseas Chinese to live amongst themselves in peaceful coexistence and in contentment. Yet you still call [our position] anti-communism, anti-Chinese and anti-people... Our light will shine a righteous path for our party and rest of the overseas community, so they can avoid your deathtrap. We will let our compatriots know what rotten melon and stinking tofu you are.²⁸⁶

...你輩自稱,大陸中共毛澤東政權是民主政權,既是民主,為何不准吾人批評中共暴政,批評毛澤東,民主何在?...枉費你輩在加拿大民主自由之邦居住,你輩不聞民主國家言論自由乎?還是你輩是井中之蛙不見天日,祇在井中咕咕叫,你輩不讀西人報紙乎,你輩不懂英文乎,你不見加國人民時常批評政府,批評首相,反對黨天天抨擊政府,吾人又何常見加政府或執政黨指罵人民是反政府,是反加拿大,是反加拿大人之言論。...

²⁸⁵ Chinese Times, 4 July 1970, p. 2.

²⁸⁶ Chinese Times, 4 July 1970, p. 2.

今天我人求祖國和平統一,人民享自由生活,在海外求華僑和平共處,共謀僑界幸福,你們還指罵為反共,反華,反人民論...我人可以隨時點著光明之燈,照耀著我黨人及僑胞們走進光明大道,免至跌落你們擺弄死亡之陷阱,使僑胞認識你們是什麼爛東瓜臭豆腐。²⁸⁷

The author of the letter was angrier with the leftists for hiding behind the dissenting branches of the Hong Men organization and for trying to pass themselves off as Hong Men members. He asserted that the pieces in the Da Zhong Bao written by the so-called Hong Men members from eastern Canada were an “iron-clad proof of [the leftists’] deception and disgrace” (陰惡卑恥鐵證).²⁸⁸ The author concluded that the leftist’s attempt to divide and conquer Hong Men would fail.

Though this piece was a reader’s letter, many editorials and announcements in the Chinese Times were just as vitriolic in tone and had as many personal insults against the so-called leftists. The Chinatown News tried to directly address the subject of recognition from an objective or academic viewpoint. In contrast, the Chinese Times did not deal with recognition per se but was very emotional and personal in its viewpoint. The newspaper focused on addressing the unity of the Hong Men Society, the local pro-PRC faction, and Chinese politics in the context of the Nationalist-Communist rivalry.

The harsh rhetoric of the Chinese Times suggested that the leaders of the Vancouver Hong Men organization were put in a desperate and defensive

²⁸⁷ Chinese Times, 4 July 1970, p. 2.

²⁸⁸ Chinese Times, 4 July 1970, p. 2.

position when Canada was normalizing its relations with the PRC. Firstly, the Hong Men leaders had to justify their “stance of independence and transcendence” (獨立超然立場).²⁸⁹ At the same time they had to demolish the Da Zhong Bao’s charge that they were de facto collaborators with the KMT. The Hong Men organization had vehemently denied that they supported the KMT, which they had described as a “bureaucratic association” (官僚集團).²⁹⁰ In a sense, the Hong Men organization at times represented those in the local Chinese community who were dissatisfied with the local KMT leadership. Ng’s study has pointed that even some KMT or ROC supporters in Vancouver felt alienated by the Mandarin-speaking consular staff, who assumed an air of superiority. They also resented the Taiwanese government for giving higher priority to the overseas communities in the US and Southeast Asia.²⁹¹

If the KMT was made up of elites, then the Chinese Communists were made up of dogmatic party militants according to the Chinese Times. The Hong Men organization had a very bleak view of the situation in Mainland China. They believed that the Chinese Communist Party cared only about their class war, power struggle and world revolution and ignored the needs of the country. This assessment was clearly elucidated in a commentary titled “Power Struggle and People Exploitation Bury the Nation” (鬥爭賊民奪權喪國), which appeared in the

²⁸⁹ This term was present in many editorials in the Chinese Times during the newspaper war. For instance, see Chinese Times, 14 July 1970, p. 3.

²⁹⁰ For instance, this characterization of the KMT was seen in Chinese Times, 14 July 1970, p. 3.

²⁹¹ Ng, p. 86.

Chinese Times in July 1970.²⁹² The author of this commentary asserted that the communist revolution had brought retribution (報應) for the masses in China against oppressive landlords and capitalists. However, the author argued that the communists continued to use the poor and disenfranchised only for their own ambition. Consequently, China had not become modern and prosperous in the postwar period, and instead suffered from starvation and misery. The commentary also blamed all the troubles in the Mainland on Mao Zedong, who was described as vicious and megalomaniac.²⁹³ The commentary concluded that Mao's regime was totalitarian and untrustworthy because Mao had begun to purge his longtime associates who happened to disagree with him.²⁹⁴

Whereas the Da Zhong Bao focused only on the positive side of the PRC, the Chinese Times focused on the negative. The old-timers in the local Chinese community shuddered at the developments in Mainland in the late 1960s. Most overseas Chinese were shocked by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which was subsiding as Canada was establishing ties with the PRC. Most Hong Men supporters no longer felt ambivalent about the Chinese Communists after the purges of many longtime and moderate party leaders. They also were disturbed by the unrest in Hong Kong relating to the Cultural Revolution. The Chinese Times characterized the Cultural Revolution as the product of revolutionary excesses and youth rebellion, and it equated the Red Guards with

²⁹² Chinese Times, 7 July 1970, p. 2.

²⁹³ The editorial called Mao Zedong "a person who was lacking learning, very arrogant, extremely cruel, and exceedingly power-hungry" (不學無術, 剛復自用, 心狠手辣, 權力慾望其大無比之徒). See Chinese Times, 7 July 1970, p. 2.

²⁹⁴ Chinese Times, 7 July 1970, p. 2.

the “leftists” in Hong Kong and in overseas communities.²⁹⁵ They were all part of a communist front that sought to cause chaos around the world. An article titled “The Leftists Are A Cancer to Hong Kong” (左仔乃香港之癌), which appeared in the Chinese Times on 14 July 1970, was an example that showed this persistent, Cold War attitude in some Hong Men supporters.²⁹⁶

Overall, the Hong Men supporters were critical of the dictatorship of Mao and Chiang. Hence, they contended that the most patriotic and safest position for overseas Chinese was to remain neutral and hope that eventually the KMT and Chinese Communists would reconcile. The Chinese Times in a sense was similar to the Chinatown News in its position on Chinese politics. However, the Hong Men supporters argued their position from the perspective of overseas Chinese nationals who were committed to their home country. As the letter from “The White Cloth of Hong Men” indicates, the Hong Men supporters believed that criticizing the Chinese government of the day was their duty. Another editorial titled “A Discussion on Real and Phony Patriots” (論真假愛國者) further suggested that talking about Chinese politics was not simply a matter of their right as Canadian citizens but also a matter of their right as overseas Chinese.²⁹⁷ This editorial specifically addressed the anti-Chinese charge from the Da Zhong Bao. Its basic argument was that no single party, leader or ideology could

²⁹⁵ For instance, the Chinese Times described the Da Zhong Bao as representing a new class of elites who were in the business of oppressing and riding on top of the common people (新階級— 在壓制人民,騎在人民頭上), like the communist party cadres.

²⁹⁶ Chinese Times, 14 July 1970, p. 2

²⁹⁷ Chinese Times, 13 July 1970, p. 3.

represent the entire China. The editorial moreover stated that the Chinese citizens had the “right and responsibility” (權利亦是義務) to severely criticize the Nationalist and Communist regime. The editorial additionally claimed that those who started the newspaper war were supporters of dictatorship and not patriots as they claimed.²⁹⁸

The Chinese Times threw back the anti-Chinese charge at the Da Zhong Bao and accused the youth activists in the local Chinese community of being disloyal to their compatriots, especially fellow sojourners. For example, the Chinese Times carried a letter supposedly written by an exchange student in Alberta, which told the Hong Men organization about the shameful and seditious activities of other Chinese college students. The letter, which had the title “Leftists Living in Canada Learn Mao’s Little Red Book in order to Harm Han-Chinese” (左仔學得毛語錄, 站在加邦害漢人), stated that Chinese exchange students should not participate in demonstrations and radical movements.²⁹⁹ They were “only guests” (只是客人), so they had no right to interfere in Canadian politics and create unwanted attention to the local Chinese community. The author particularly denounced a Da Zhong Bao contributor, who was a college student from Hong Kong. According to the author, this leftist insulted the Chinese Times pundits with his lies, and he also got arrested in Vancouver for spreading Maoism. If he and his associates did not like Canada, the author wrote, they then

²⁹⁸ Chinese Times, 13 July 1970, p. 3.

²⁹⁹ Chinese Times, 2 July 1970, p. 2.

should move back to Mainland China where they could easily be jailed for their subversive activities.³⁰⁰

The Hong Men organization was very concerned about the impact of the Canadian recognition of the PRC had on the order and harmony of the local Chinese community. Similar to the Chinatown News, the Chinese Times wanted to minimize the division and disruption that arose out of this event. However, the Hong Men supporters were more worried about the values and integrity of their organization. After all, the Hong Men was a broad-based coalition of new immigrants and old settlers, and there were existing differences among members plus contentious issues, such as leadership. Indeed, the leaders in the Vancouver branch seized upon the newspaper war and recognition to assert their authority. They put out a series of party proclamations that basically told the rest of the members to obey their stance on homeland politics. For example, the Chinese Times on July 6, 7 and 14 carried notices of warnings from the Hong Men People's Party. The notice on the July 7 stated that the branch organization from the eastern Canada and some local members had abused the "unrestrained democratic system" (放任民主) of the Hong Men Society. Hence, the Chinese Times suggested that the loyal Hong Men supporters and the overseas community should "increase alertness" (提高警覺) to these "traitors" (奸徒) and

³⁰⁰ Chinese Times, 2 July 1970, p. 2.

“bullies” (惡霸) who sought to subvert the organization and destroy its independence.³⁰¹

Likewise, the editorial published on July 14 thundered about the renegade members who did not want Hong Men Society to be revitalized, but instead wanted it to be co-opted by outside forces. The editorial, which titled “Hook-up, Sell-out, and Collaborate-with” (勾結, 出賣, 投靠), explained that ambition, greed, and prejudice motivated the renegades to become the lapdogs or “tails” (尾巴) of the Chinese Communists.³⁰² In this and other commentaries, the Hong Men leaders raised the fear that the renegades would use Chinese politics to push for a takeover of the organization along with its properties and financial resources.³⁰³ Ng’s study on Vancouver Chinatown has shown that the established ethnic associations accumulated sizable wealth and properties in the postwar period. Next to the club fees, real estate investments provided supplementing income for the aging old-timers.³⁰⁴ Straaton also notes that an important source of power for the Vancouver Hong Men organization came from its extensive property holdings in Chinatown.³⁰⁵ The member in the inner circle of the Hong Men, who had been guarding their financial and political interests in the local Chinese community, were probably worried that what they had been saving for the last few decades would no longer be in their control. The old-timers were also afraid that their

³⁰¹ Chinese Times, 7 July 1970, p. 3.

³⁰² Chinese Times, 14 July 1970, p. 3.

³⁰³ Chinese Times, 14 July 1970, p. 3. Also see Chinese Times, 6-7 July 1970, p. 3.

³⁰⁴ Ng, pp. 67-75.

³⁰⁵ Straaton, p. 66.

resources would be given to the pro-PRC faction or the PRC government if the recognition supporters had their way in the organization.

The July 14th editorial again criticized the alleged leftists for spreading discontent in the local Chinese community. The Chinese Times described the Da Zhong Bao and the disloyal Hong Men members as having nothing but contempt for their fellow compatriots.

...[It is fine that the dissenters] love only the PRC and not the Hong Men Society. However, they are even opposed to ideas such as “having compassion and tolerance” as well as “Chinese should love each other”. Their rejection of these concepts is truly insane and out of touch with common sense. Ranting, hatred, and war do not solve any problem. This applied to [homeland] politics, affairs of the overseas community, and operation of the Hong Meng society...³⁰⁶

....祇愛中共不愛洪門也吧,但連『敦厚仁愛』,『希望中國人相親相愛』也反對,這就確實狂妄到超出了常情。亂罵,仇恨,戰爭,都不能解決問題,國事如此,橋社,洪門亦如此...³⁰⁷

The editorials in July 1970 also expressed the resentment of the Hong Men leaders towards those in the community who sought advancement by being friendly towards the PRC since it was going to be the official Chinese government. The editorial on July 6 and 7, for example, suggested that the PRC sympathizers within the Hong Men really wanted to change the color of the organization so that they could become leaders of the organization and spokespeople of the community.³⁰⁸ Already there were reports in the Chinese

³⁰⁶ Chinese Times, 14 July 1970, p. 3

³⁰⁷ Chinese Times, 14 July 1970, p. 3

³⁰⁸ Chinese Times, 6-7 July 1970, p. 3

Times that the dissenters in the Hong Men were criticizing Harry Con for taking unauthorized trips abroad and using the organization's resource as his own. Additionally, some members, including one self-proclaimed old-timer, complained that their organization was drifting towards the right or the KMT camp. The Da Zhong Bao of course tried to widen the internal dispute by siding with the dissenters.³⁰⁹

The Canadian recognition of the PRC thus was pushing the Hong Meng Society into a state of crisis. The leaders of the Vancouver branch, which had been head of all Canadian Hong Men organizations, were now facing challenges from within their local Chinese community and from the rising branches in eastern Canada. As discussed earlier, the Toronto branch had a different attitude towards the PRC. Hence, Toronto and other regional branches asserted themselves by switching allegiance from the ROC to PRC. In summary, the Chinese Times engaged in the newspaper war with the Da Zhong Bao not merely because of the Hong Men position on Chinese politics. The Chinese Times was additionally helping the Vancouver branch to suppress internal strife and quash the rival branch organizations. The debate on how the community should respond to the impending recognition of the PRC and on patriotism became a vicious, zero-sum conflict for both newspapers. The reasons behind the rhetoric were emotional ties and ideological animosity between the conservative old-timers and left-leaning youth activists. The leaders of the

³⁰⁹ For instance, see Chinese Times, 10 October 1970, p. 4. Also see Chinese Times, 28 September-3 October 1970, p. 3; and 10 October 1970, p. 4. In the Chinatown News, Harry Con (簡建平) had been referred to as the lodge president, but in the Chinese Times, his position was secretary general (簡秘書長).

Vancouver branch moreover feared and loathed the activists, who were perceived as initiating a hostile takeover of this influential organization by co-opting the discontented members. Whereas the Chinatown News perceived the alleged communist infiltration as a fantasy, the Chinese Times believed that the conspiracy was real. Overall, the newspaper war showed that local power struggles and political maneuverings in the Chinatown were sometimes masked by references to Chinese politics.

4.2 The Coverage and Response of the Chinese Times on the Sino-Canadian Communiqué and Its Aftermath

On the whole, the Chinese Times kept track of Ottawa's negotiation with Beijing in September and October 1970. Events at the UN and Stockholm pertaining to China regularly appeared on the front page of the newspaper. However, the Chinese Times made very few investigative reports on the mood of the Chinese communities in Vancouver and other Canadian cities. Instead of canvassing and covering the diverse opinions from Chinese-Canadians, like the Chinatown News had done, the Chinese Times used editorials to express the Hong Men organization's view on Chinese politics and organizational politics. The Chinese Times' coverage on Canadian recognition of the PRC provided an interesting account of the development of the Vancouver Hong Meng organization. The coverage described how the old-timers in the organization adjusted their view of the PRC and responded to the challenges that appeared during this turbulent period.

The newspaper war, crisis in the Hong Men Society, and Ottawa's success in its negotiation with Beijing had led to the Chinese Times producing several editorial series and notices just before the Sino-Canadian Communiqué. These commentaries indirectly addressed the recognition of the PRC. However, for most part the commentaries were party manifestos or statements explaining why the ROC was the legitimate home state and why it had symbolic and historical importance to the Hong Men society. The editorials and notices also expressed intolerance towards the pro-PRC faction in the local Chinese community and renegade Hong Men members.

The first of these editorial series, titled "Fighting to Oppose Violence and Defend the Hong Men" (為反暴衛洪而戰), was basically another propaganda piece against the Da Zhong Bao and the PRC sympathizers within the Hong Men.³¹⁰ In this editorial series, which appeared from September 28 to October 3, the Chinese Times contended that "a tooth for a tooth" (以牙還牙) was the way to deal with the irrational and "ugly monster" (兇惡獠牙的怪獸) known as the leftist.³¹¹ The newspaper furthermore described radicals, whose political style consisted of smearing their opponents and demonstrations, as self-aggrandizing and lacking group or ethnic loyalty. According to the editorial, the radicals displayed "thoughtless and individualistic acts of heroism" (匹夫之勇, 個人英雄),

³¹⁰ Chinese Times, 28 September-3 October 1970, p. 3.

³¹¹ Chinese Times, 28 September 1970, p. 3.

and they thought as if they made up the entire overseas community in Canada.³¹²

“Fighting to Oppose Violence and Defend the Hong Men” additionally asserted that Hong Men supporters were dismayed by the radicals for believing in their slogans pertaining to the so-called achievements of the PRC.³¹³ They were too disappointed at some so-called longtime or leading Hong Men members, who for selfish reasons had started to trade their values for the PRC flag. The editorial wondered if these defectors were fifth column agents rather than loyal members.³¹⁴ Their accusation that the Hong Men was turning to the right was another plot to destroy the organization’s independence and popularity.

“Fighting to Oppose Violence” was followed by another a long editorial series, titled “Is the ROC the Legitimate Home Country for the Hong Men?” (中華民國是否為洪正統的問題). The first installment of the five-part editorial appeared in the Chinese Times on October 9 and the last appeared on October 15, two days after the Sino-Canadian Communiqué.³¹⁵ The first two parts, which was written before the formalization of the Canada-PRC ties, again attacked the Da Zhong Bao and branch organization in eastern Canada. The Chinese Times was apparently not yet ready to accept the reality of the recognition of the PRC, and it harshly rebuked the renegade members who tried to put up the PRC flag

³¹² Chinese Times, 29 September 1970, p. 3.

³¹³ Chinese Times, 30 September 1970, p. 3.

³¹⁴ Chinese Times, 29 September & 1 October 1970, p. 3,

³¹⁵ Chinese Times, 9-10 & 13-15 October 1970, p. 3.

before a formal announcement on recognition.³¹⁶ However, the Chinese Times slightly modified its position after the communiqué was made on October 13. The third part of editorial suggested the Hong Men might accept the regime in Beijing as the official Chinese government and the representative at the UN, if it dropped the word “people” from the People’s Republic of China.

The most unfortunate development in our country right now is its division by the Nationalists and Chinese Communists. There exist not merely two regimes but two different names for China. The Chinese Communists have adopted the title The People’s Republic of China for the Mainland and in doing so they have created the “two Chinas” dilemma. If the communist government would publicly state that the “People’s Republic of China” was to going be abbreviated into the “Republic of China”, then the UN and we in the Hong Men Society would be less confused on the issue of legitimacy...³¹⁷

當前我國最不幸之事,是國共分裂為二,且不是兩個政權,而是兩個國號,中共執政改國號為『中國人民共和國』,形成了『兩個中國』。假定中共說『中國人民共和國』簡稱『中華民國』時,則今日之聯合國及我洪門對這個正統的問題便減少了麻煩...³¹⁸

However, the Hong Men Society’s support for the ROC was not simply based on its name. “Is the ROC the Legitimate Home Country” furthermore explained in detail the historical, cultural and sentimental connection between the Hong Men Society and the Republic of China.³¹⁹ The editorial asserted that the Hong Men Society was instrumental in the success of Sun Yat-sen’s nationalist

³¹⁶ Chinese Times, 9-10, October 1970, p. 3

³¹⁷ Chinese Times, 13 October 1970, p. 3

³¹⁸ Chinese Times, 13 October 1970, p. 3

³¹⁹ Chinese Times, 9-10 & 13-15 October 1970, p. 3.

movement, and even before Sun Yat-sen the Hong Men had participated in countless struggles for the Chinese nation. Therefore, the Chinese Times argued that the Hong Men members should not deny the organization's past, and the legitimacy of the ROC should not be a left-versus-right issue.³²⁰ The newspaper also claimed that those who equated the use of the ROC flag with supporting the KMT were being idiotic because they confused patriotism with party politics.³²¹

"Is the ROC the Legitimate Home Country" indicated that the Chinese Times was helping the Vancouver branch of the Hong Men Society to enforce party regulations and discipline. The last part of the editorial stated that the Hong Men People's Party could no longer tolerate the minority of dissenting members who ignored of their history and obligations. They had violated several rules that included obeying the party's platform concerning Chinese politics and keeping secrets on the party's activities. The editorial also asserted that the Hong Men Society would hold debates and referendums before publicly associating with any political movement or government. The renegades were trying to circumvent this process.³²² The editorial concluded that the renegades should thus admit their guilt and hope for forgiveness from the organization.³²³

Likewise, the national body of the Hong Men Society on October 10 made an announcement in the Chinese Times that called for unity in the organization and obedience to the party leadership. October 10th was an important date for

³²⁰ Chinese Times, 13 October 1970, p. 3

³²¹ Chinese Times, 10 October 1970, p. 3. Note that the KMT emblem, which was a blazing white sun behind a blue sky backdrop, was adopted from the ROC flag.

³²² Chinese Times, 14 October 1970, p. 3.

³²³ Chinese Times, 15 October 1970, p. 3.

the Hong Men and KMT because this date was the anniversary of the uprising at the city of Wuchang in 1911.³²⁴ The Wuchang uprising was the first victory for the anti-Manchu, pro-Republican force. The event had precipitated other revolts in China, and by the end of 1911 the ROC was declared. The Hong Men national body in its announcement therefore explicitly reminded its members to commemorate the anniversary of the 1911 Revolution and adhere to the organization's position on Chinese politics.³²⁵ Some Hong Men members were annoyed by the date of the Sino-Canadian Communiqué, which occurred a few days after the anniversary of 1911 Revolution. The recognition of the PRC was also close to the commemoration of the martyrdom of "Wan Yun Long" (萬雲龍), the legendary founder of the Hong Men Society in China.³²⁶ The announcement further claimed that the Hong Men had formulated the policy stance of "peaceful unification and rebuilding of China" (和平統一重建中華) because the organization did not want to cause strife in the overseas community by making "reckless decision" (粗率主張), especially when the Mainland-Taiwan division still existed.³²⁷

Moreover, the October 10th announcement declared that the Chinese Times was the official media organ for the Hong Men Society and members

³²⁴ Wuchang is located in Hupei Province of China.

³²⁵ Chinese Times, 10 October 1970, p. 4.

³²⁶ For instance, see Chinese Times, 10 October 1970, p. 3. Note that the date for commemorating Wan Yun Long is based on the Chinese lunar calendar, so it is subjected to change from year to year.

³²⁷ Chinese Times, 10 October 1970, p. 4.

should not communicate through rival newspapers like the Da Zhong Bao. The national body was threatening to expel members who joined the “Eastern Canada” (加東) branch, which was a “setup by outsiders” (外人機構).³²⁸ In the announcement, the national body stated there was no evidence that leaders like Harry Con had abused their power or turned to the right politically, so the organization would not tolerate any more disrespect towards them from other members.³²⁹ The announcement additionally defined the Chinese people as one homogenous national group regardless of their politics and where they lived. It even hinted that “*huayi*” (華裔) or those of Chinese descent (like the Canadian-born Chinese residents) would be included in the general Chinese category.³³⁰ They were all people of the Chinese nation-state or Middle Kingdom whether they like it or not.

On the whole, the Chinese Times editorials approached the subject of the Canadian recognition of the PRC in an indirect and subtle manner. They did not attempt to analyze Ottawa’s motives or present a variety of viewpoints in the Chinese-Canadian communities. The commentaries instead concentrated on discussing the symbolic and historical importance of the ROC as well as the need for party discipline during this turbulent period. The Chinese Times only presented the viewpoint of the *huaqiao*, who were the newspaper’s intended

³²⁸ Chinese Times, 10 October 1970, p. 4.

³²⁹ Chinese Times, 10 October 1970, p. 4.

³³⁰ Chinese Times, 4 October 1970, p. 4. For a concise definition of the *huayi* see Wang Gungwu, China and The Overseas Chinese (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1991), pp. 8-10. Wang Gungwu also provides historical definitions for *huaqiao* and its variants in first chapter of this book.

readers. The Chinatown News and its Canadian-born readers naturally disliked the narrow scope and arbitrary characteristics of the old-timers' political and cultural discourse. The Chinese Times' interpretation of the neutrality and apolitical position reinforced the Canadian-born group's perception that the local Chinese community was inward-looking, China-born and authoritarian.

There were few articles in the Chinese Times that were devoted to the actual coverage of the Vancouver Chinese community's reaction to the Sino-Canadian Communiqué. Similar to the Chinatown News, the Chinese Times reported that the local Chinese community was generally "disinterested" (平淡) in recognition.³³¹ On October 13, the Chinese Times had a headline that announced Ottawa had formally established ties with the PRC and abandoned its relationship with the ROC.³³² A day later, the newspaper published a smaller front-page article which read like a summary of Roy Mah's "Reaction to Canada-China Ties".³³³ This article divided the community into the jubilant PRC supporters, the panicking Nationalists, and the majority of indifferent Canadian citizens of Chinese ancestry. It also reported that there was a feeling of pride among the Chinese residents regardless of age and politics.³³⁴ In the following weeks, the Chinese Times would have a few more articles on Ottawa's position on the PRC's entry into the UN as well as on the Mainland-Taiwan division.

³³¹ Chinese Times, 14 October 1970, p. 1.

³³² Chinese Times, 13 October 1970, p. 1.

³³³ Chinese Times, 14 October 1970, p. 1.

³³⁴ Chinese Times, 14 October 1970, p. 1.

These articles however were dispassionate in tone.³³⁵ There was also a column on October 16 about the Chinese organizations in Ontario condemning Ottawa's policy.³³⁶ The Hong Men Society did not display its disappointment as publicly as other organizations such as the benevolent associations. According to the Chinese Times and Chinatown News, the Hong Men Society held many conferences in which the regional representatives in North America tried to work out a new position on Chinese politics.³³⁷ In comparison, the front-page articles were exceptions to the bulk of the Chinese Times' coverage, which was biased and emotional.

The Vancouver branch of the Hong Men Society had realized that it must adjust its rhetoric and position on Chinese politics at the time of the formal diplomatic exchange between Canada and the PRC. The editorial series on the ROC's legitimacy, for instance, showed that the Hong Men was willing to accept the Beijing government if it changed its name.³³⁸ The subsequent editorials also showed signs of compromise. Immediately after the series on the ROC's legitimacy, the Chinese Times published a two-part editorial that called for the creation of "a grand coalition of the Chinese nation" (中華民族大同盟).³³⁹

According to the editorial, this coalition would be composed of not only overseas Chinese but also the "open-minded moderates in the Nationalist and Chinese

³³⁵ For examples, see Chinese Times, 16 October 1970, p. 1; and 13 November 1970, p. 1.

³³⁶ Chinese Times, 16 October 1970, p. 8.

³³⁷ For example, see Chinese Times, 15 October 1970, p. 8.

³³⁸ Chinese Times, 13 October 1970, p. 3.

³³⁹ Chinese Times, 16-17 October 1970, p. 3.

Communist camp” (國共內部的開明人士).³⁴⁰ This inclusive coalition aimed to unite China territorially and worked for the betterment of the Chinese people. The editorial contended that dynasties and ideologies changed over time, so the communist dictatorship in Mainland China was just a phase. Likewise, the editorial expressed hopes that the radicals in the local Chinese community would mature and realize that they were being “outrageous” (狂妄).³⁴¹ The Hong Men supporters claimed that they did not want “militaristic, single party armies” (軍國式的黨軍) and “deification of individuals” (神化個人). They only wanted a practical and rational government that served the people.³⁴² The commentary further vaguely suggested that the Hong Men would agree with Mao Zedong’s slogan, “it is reasonable to rebel” (造反有理), if the communist regime was less ideologically dogmatic and focused more on social welfare of the masses.³⁴³

The editorial also appealed to the “professionals and academics” (學者專家) in the overseas community to join this non-partisan movement because they cannot “escape from [their] responsibility to the ancestral country’s future” (不可

³⁴⁰ Chinese Times, 17 October 1970, p. 3.

³⁴¹ Chinese Times, 16 October 1970, p. 3.

³⁴² Chinese Times, 16 October 1970, p. 3.

³⁴³ Chinese Times, 17 October 1970, p. 3.

逃避對祖國未來建設的良心和責任).³⁴⁴ The editorial ended with a challenge to the “intellectuals and teachers in high school and college” (大中任教的高級知識分子), especially those who adhere to the Da Zhong Bao’s viewpoint. The Chinese Times demanded that they think of alternative ways to help China and the overseas Chinese besides angry protests or “shouting on the street” (罵街) and empty Maoist slogans.³⁴⁵

Overall, the editorial showed that the Canadian recognition of the PRC had started sink into the minds of the leaders of the Hong Men Society. They were awkwardly abandoning their hard-line, hostile attitude towards the PRC while trying to reaffirm their independent position on Chinese politics. The Hong Men leaders were also awkwardly trying to reach out to the young, Canadian-born Chinese whose political style and cultural values clashed with the older, China-born Chinese. Similar to Chinatown News, the Chinese Times saw the controversy over the Canada-China ties as an example of the growing generation gap between the early immigrants and their descendents. As the editorial indicates, the Hong Men supporters were especially antagonistic and suspicious of the young activists in the local Chinese community. The Chinese Times often called these activists “trouble-making protestors” and “useless pseudo-intellectuals” (罵街先生, 流口水教授) because of their sympathetic view of the PRC and their distaste towards the existing social order in Chinatown.

³⁴⁴ Chinese Times, 17 October 1970, p. 3.

³⁴⁵ Chinese Times, 17 October 1970, p. 3.

Additionally, the editorial on coalition as well as the preceding commentaries showed what political neutrality meant for the Hong Meng organization. The Chinatown News contended that the Canadian recognition of PRC should result in the Chinese community being less committed to Chinese politics. The Chinese Times in contrast contended that the community should be committed in this area after this event.

Nevertheless, the editorial on a grand Chinese coalition reflected the Hong Men organization's role as a consensus builder and community representative. It avoided becoming an isolated, partisan group. Those working at the Chinatown News shared and in a sense competed for this role during the recognition controversy as well. Following the Sino-Canadian Communiqué, the Chinese Times and Chinatown News would advocate that the individuals and groups in the local Chinese community should look past their differences and cooperate with each other. Likewise, both news presses hoped that the Nationalist and Chinese Communist regime would reconcile for the sake of the people living in both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Moreover, both presses presented the Chinese residents as being loyal Canadian citizens by accepting Ottawa's decision. The Chinese Times however insisted that being a good overseas Chinese was compatible with being a good Canadian citizens, particularly when both Chinese and Canadians would believe in democratic institutions and values.³⁴⁶

Since the end of October, the ROC supporters in the Vancouver Hong Men organization realized that they could not win the debate on the legitimacy of

³⁴⁶ Similar argument was made by the opponents of the recognition in Toronto's Chinese community. See Lum, pp. 221-222, 225.

their home government. The pro-PRC force was emboldened and vocal after the Sino-Canadian Communiqué. It not only consisted of the energetic and young Chinese-Canadians but also rival regional branches of the Hong Men Society. As the Chinatown News indicated, the senior *tusheng* leaders were also cautiously optimistic about the opening of Mainland China. The Chinatown News also found that the old-timers, who were loyal to the ROC but not the KMT, became rather quiet because they not want to provoke the extremists on either side.³⁴⁷ In general, the Vancouver Chinese community was growing weary of the conflict.

Similarly, the Chinese Times reflected the swing in the momentum of the debate. On October 24, the newspaper put out a short notice that declared its intention to terminate the war of words with the Da Zhong Bao.³⁴⁸ The Chinese Times gave a rather peculiar reason to abruptly end the newspaper war. Its statement claimed that the staff of the Chinese Times felt they should not encourage “provocative discussion” (挑撥性的言論) in the Chinese community during this “unusual period” (非長時間).³⁴⁹ The Canadian government at the time had implemented the War Measures Act in response to the kidnappings of government officials by a group of Quebec separatists. This crisis was featured in the front-page of the Chinese Times as frequently as the PRC’s diplomatic breakthroughs. The staff of the Chinese Times did not refer to the recent controversy over the recognition of the PRC, but they thanked the readers who

³⁴⁷ See Chinatown News, 3 February 1971, pp. 52-53; and 3 October 1971, pp. 46-47.

³⁴⁸ Chinese Times, 24 October 1970, p. 8.

³⁴⁹ Chinese Times, 24 October 1970, p. 8.

helped defend the newspaper's reputation in the "pen war" (筆戰).³⁵⁰ The short statement concluded that the Chinese Times had always been and will continue to be independent, accurate and unbiased in its reporting.³⁵¹ Overall, this notice, though located several pages behind the headlines and editorial section, was an admission of defeat by the Hong Men leaders. The length of the statement also suggested that the Chinese Times wanted to move on from the newspaper war with the Da Zhong Bao as quickly as possible.

The mood of resignation among the old-timers was more explicit in the editorial series on the legitimacy of the ROC. One segment in the series gloomily stated that the Hong Men Society was powerless to stop Canada and other countries from negotiating with the PRC. The editorial moreover exaggerated that a "united front of the New Left and international violent organizations" (新左派, 國際暴力集團聯合陣線) was succeeding in coercing governments around the world.³⁵²

...Canada and Communist China are now in intense negotiation. Even the UN, which had a constitution promoting freedom and human rights, would abandon its principles as it faced the might [of the PRC and New Left forces]. Hence, how could we belong to the insignificant Hong Men organization dare to speak out [against the PRC].³⁵³

³⁵⁰ Chinese Times, 24 October 1970, p. 8.

³⁵¹ Chinese Times, 24 October 1970, p. 8.

³⁵² Chinese Times, 13 October 1970, p. 3.

³⁵³ Chinese Times, 13 October 1970, p. 3.

...中(共)加建交談判正熱,甚聯和國之正義自由人權之憲章也為遷就強權而有揚棄可能之年代,以我們這個小小洪門,又有何可言,又有向敢言?³⁵⁴

As the Vancouver branch of the Hong Men organization was losing grounds in the recognition debate, it was also losing its power vis-à-vis the rival branch organizations. The Chinese Times had been serving the interests of the Vancouver branch, which was stifling dissents within the organization and from other branches. However, the newspaper could no longer ignore the calls for changes pertaining to the organization's stance on Chinese politics and its power configuration. On November 8, the regional representatives of the Hong Men Society in Canada held a general meeting to resolve the internal dispute. The Eastern Canada branch demanded that the national body acknowledge the PRC as the sole Chinese government and acknowledge the Eastern Canada branch as a legitimate branch organization. Moreover, the Hong Men members from Toronto, Calgary and other cities demanded that the executive board of the Chinese Times bring in members from regional branches outside of Vancouver/British Columbia.³⁵⁵ On December 10, the Chinese Times put out an announcement on the result of the November meeting. According to notice, the Vancouver branch had made several significant concessions. The national body would adopt the PRC because the Hong Men members had to respect the Canadian government and its laws.³⁵⁶ In order to administer affairs according to

³⁵⁴ Chinese Times, 13 October 1970, p. 3.

³⁵⁵ Chinese Times, 13 November 1970, p. 8.

³⁵⁶ Chinese Times, 10 December 1970, p. 7.

local situations, the national body would also reinstate the Eastern Canada faction as the Toronto branch.³⁵⁷ These moves by the national body implied that the Vancouver branch had lost its dominance, and it had to make compromises for the survival of the organization as a whole.

In general, the notice was a hint that the leadership in the Vancouver branch was facing the harsh reality of recent developments. However, the notice was also an indication that the Vancouver branch very unhappy with the recognition of the PRC. The event had precipitated a turnaround in the organization's political affiliation and power structure. Instead of being in the front-page or editorial section (as usually with other public statements), the announcement on these important changes to the organization was short and rather inconspicuous (on page 7 of the newspaper). The conflict within the Hong Men Society over the autonomy of regional branches and the control over the Chinese Times was another example of the linkage between local politics in the overseas Chinese community and Chinese politics.

Though the Vancouver lodge of the Hong Men Society was losing its influence, it tried to remain firm in its independent position regarding the ongoing conflict between the Chinese Nationalists and Communists. The Vancouver branch also tried to retain its autonomy vis-à-vis other regional branches, which started to have more say in the affairs of the organization overall. In the final installment of the editorial on the legitimacy of the ROC, the Vancouver branch asserted that the majority of the Hong Men supporters saw the internal conflict

³⁵⁷ Chinese Times, 10 December 1970, p. 7.

over the recognition of the PRC as “the darkest moment in the history of the organization” (洪門歷史最黑暗之歷史).³⁵⁸ The editorial furthermore stated that the party leaders should take the “necessary actions” (必要有所行動) to prevent the disunity caused by the leftists. Otherwise, they should “publicly announce the disbanding of the Hong Men and admit that they were historic criminals” (公佈洪門從此解散,承認是歷史之罪人).³⁵⁹ This remark was thus a threat from the Vancouver branch to the national body. The Chinese Times hinted that the Vancouver branch would withdraw if the Hong Men Society’s constitution and leadership were radically altered.

Another example was the Hong Men Society’s national convention, which took place in Victoria in April 1971. Before the convention, the Chinatown News reported that there was going to be “verbal fireworks” because the delegates from the Eastern Canada faction were calling for “all-out support” of the PRC. The delegates from the Vancouver lodge, led by Harry Con and Chan Mun Bun, in contrast were still calling for peaceful unification of the homeland. The Vancouver delegates in other words wanted to remain non-aligned.³⁶⁰ The Chinatown News also commented that the “squabble between the factions seemed so irrelevant” because diplomatic recognition was a matter between

³⁵⁸ Chinese Times, 15 October 1970, p. 3.

³⁵⁹ Chinese Times, 15 October 1970, p. 3.

³⁶⁰ Chinatown News, 3 April 1971, pp. 49-50.

Ottawa and Beijing.³⁶¹ The columnist for the magazine moreover expected optimistically that Beijing and Taipei will start talking to each other in a few years.³⁶²

At the end of the convention, the opposing factions had reached a compromise and made a new policy statement. The Hong Men Society would fly the PRC flag but stood for a democratic and territorially united China. Much to the delight of the Chinatown News, the Hong Men delegates also declared that they were Canadian citizens and their aim should be “building a better Canada for all Canadians.”³⁶³ Hence, the Vancouver branch was a stubborn holdout in comparison with other branches in recognizing the PRC as the ruling government of China. From the perspective of the Chinese Times, the Hong Men supporters adopted the PRC for the sake of obeying the Canadian government and maintaining harmony in the organization. Nevertheless, the Vancouver branch of the Hong Men Society showed itself flexible in comparison with other traditional ethnic associations, particularly the CBA. The Hong Men leaders found that in order to maintain the organization’s populist and inclusive characteristics, they had to grudgingly yield to the external and internal pressures for reform. To stop the internal strife, the Hong Men leaders had to redirect their focus on the local affairs of the community and move away from the controversial Chinese politics. By contrast, the CBA until the late 1970s would cling to the lost hope that the KMT would win the Chinese civil war.

³⁶¹ Chinatown News, 3 April 1971, pp. 49-50.

³⁶² Chinatown News, 3 April 1971, pp. 49-50.

³⁶³ Chinatown News, 18 April 1971, p. 43.

In summary, the Chinese Times' coverage of the Canadian recognition of the PRC was generally negative and at times very depressing. Oppositely, the Chinatown News' coverage of this event had an air of optimism. Although the Chinese Times prided itself of having an independent perspective, it clearly favored the Republic of China over the People's Republic of China. This position was explicit before the Sino-Canadian declaration and implicitly afterwards. The language in the staff editorials and readers letters was often emotional and crude. The Hong Men supporters justified their stance with patriotic, anti-communist and populist rhetoric. They felt that they were speaking for the aging settlers and average immigrants in the local Chinese community. Furthermore, their rhetoric was sometimes anti-intellectual and conservative because they believed that their adversaries were radical and elitist.

The Chinatown News, which catered to the Canadian-born and acculturated Chinese, disliked ideologically driven youth activists in the local Chinese community. However, the magazine showed more understanding for those who either supported or were optimistic about the Sino-Canadian rapprochement. Likewise, the magazine was sympathetic towards those who were critical of the Chinatown establishments, which included the Hong Men organization. The Chinese Times in contrast used a very harsh tone against the dissidents in the Hong Men organization. Generally, the Chinatown News took a balanced, distanced and "academic" approach to the recognition debate. In contrast, the approach of the Chinese Times was emotional and provocative.

4.3 The Parallel Development of the Hong Men Society and Overseas Chinese Nationalism

Overall, various factors contributed to the Vancouver Hong Men organization's strong identification with the Republic of China and its devotion to Chinese politics. Madeline Hsu and Timothy Stanley, for instance, assert that the patriotism expressed by the overseas Chinese in the early 1900s was a response to institutional and popular racism in North America during that period. The development of Chinatown ghettos, implementation of the head tax, race riots, anti-Oriental discourse, and other policies of racial segregation contributed to the creation of a Chinese national identity. This political and cultural identity was geographically and socially oriented to immigrants' homeland or native places. The first generation settlers carried this national identity and history of racism well into the postwar period.³⁶⁴ The situation in China after the 1911 Revolution and the Second World War further encouraged the overseas Chinese nationalism. For the old-timers living in British Columbia and Vancouver Chinatown, their "colonial experience" and participation in the campaign to save China defined them.

The Hong Men Society's own version of the Chinese nationalist discourse also had a lot to do with its development from a secret society to a political-fraternal organization. The structure, culture and historical experience (or collective memory) of the Hong Men Society were very relevant to its allegiance to the ROC, especially taking account of its antipathy towards the KMT. The conservative and nationalistic members of the Hong Men Society had created a

³⁶⁴ Stanley, pp. 485-487, 492-493. Also see Hsu, pp. 322-326.

strange narrative about China's difficult path to become a nation and nation-state, in which the Hong Men Society figured as a leading movement in the revival and uniting of the Chinese nation since the Manchu people ruled China as the Qing Dynasty in the mid-1600s. The Hong Men Society often declared that its historical mission, or its ultimate reason for existence, was to protect the Chinese nation.

The recognition of the PRC in 1970 had led to identity and organizational crisis in the Hong Men Society. As result, this nationalist discourse, rooted in the organization's culture and history, appeared frequently in the Chinese Times. The editorial series "Is the ROC the Legitimate Home Country for the Hong Men?" exemplified the discourse because this piece brought out the "official history" of the Hong Men Society in order to justify the organization's position on Chinese politics.

To understand the nationalist discourse in the Chinese Times, this research project firstly has to discuss why the Hong Men Society (a.k.a. the Chinese Freemasons or Zhigongtang) had lofty goals when its initial purpose was to provide mutual aid for immigrants. The answer lies in the origin and characteristics of the organization. The Hong Men Society had been shaped by the Chinese migrants' interactions with the North American environment. The Vancouver branch of the Hong Men Society was thus in a sense "indigenous" to Canada (and British Columbia in particular) because of the unique history of the local Chinese community. However, the Hong Men Society, similar to other

traditional Chinese organizations, drew heavily from the cultural customs, social networks and historical experiences of the early migrants' native area.

Most studies on Chinese ethnic organizations indicate that the Hong Men Society, while not related to the Western Freemasons, was a part of a wider fraternal order or secret society network that began in China. The works of Edgar Wickberg and Karin Straaton note that the Hong Men Society had chapters, sister organizations and imitations around the world, but their studies do not offer much detail on how the chapters interact and govern amongst themselves.³⁶⁵

Chinese secret societies like the Hong Men bodies are now often synonymous with international criminal organizations that popularly dubbed "triads" or "tongs".³⁶⁶ However, the Hong Men Society in Canada had been legitimate and open since it assumed the English name Freemasons in the 1920s. Its structure and ideology borrowed elements from the "frontier society" of southern and coastal China, where the initial waves of Chinese emigration to North America came from.³⁶⁷ The Hong Men Society modeled itself on the conspiratorial organizations that sprang up in South China and Southeast Asia after the Manchu conquest of the Ming dynastic state in the mid-1600s. Even by 1970, the Hong Men organization still espoused values, goals, and myths of these old secret societies. The Hong Men supporters' writing for the Chinese Times actually combined them with their nationalistic and pro-ROC rhetoric. These

³⁶⁵ For instance, see Straaton, pp. 65-67.

³⁶⁶ Pan, pp. 338-356.

³⁶⁷ Ng, pp. 13-14. Note that Straaton claims that the Hong Men Society started to call itself as the Chinese Freemasons as early as 1910. Presently, the Vancouver Chinese Freemasons retains the title Hong Men in its Chinese language signs and publications. Straaton also claims that the Vancouver Chinese Freemasons had sister organizations in Hong Kong that are still secret and illegal. See Straaton, pp. 65-67.

values and goals of the organization helped them define themselves as overseas Chinese.

Edgar Wickberg, who has examined extensively the adaptive organizations of the overseas Chinese, further differentiates the Hong Men bodies, or the fraternal associations/secret societies, from the “*huiguan*” associations that included organizations based on common surnames or home districts. Both types of organizations originated in the middle and late 1800s, when large numbers of Chinese laborers of poor and peasant background as well as smaller numbers of merchants migrated to North America and other parts of the world. Many migrants ended up staying in cities of foreign countries and needed mutual assistances and protection.³⁶⁸ Similar to the *huiguan* associations, the fraternal associations provided essential services to Chinese immigrants, such as housing, employment opportunities, and welfare in hard times. Both types of organizations also governed the overseas communities by providing mediation services for their members. The fraternal associations furthermore tried to monopolize certain occupations for their members, acting like trade guilds. Wickberg notes that before the development of umbrella organizations and the KMT ascendancy in the overseas communities in the early 1900s, the *huiguan* and fraternal associations competed (at times violently) amongst themselves for economic opportunities and political causes.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁸ Edgar Wickberg, “Overseas Chinese Adaptive Organizations, Past and Present,” in Reluctant Exiles? Migration from Hong Kong and the New Overseas Chinese, ed. Ronald Skeldon (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), pp. 71-76.

³⁶⁹ Wickberg, “Overseas Chinese Adaptive Organizations,” pp. 71-76.

These traditional organizations maintained ties to China by helping immigrants send remittances and keep in touch with news from home. They financially supported their members to make return trips to native places and shipped their bones back to China if their members died abroad. Additionally, the *huiguan* and fraternal organizations raised funds in the overseas Chinese communities. They used these funds to build charities, schools, and clinics for the immigrants. They also diverted the funds to build modern facilities in their home localities or to support patriotic causes.³⁷⁰

The Hong Men bodies differed from *huiguan* associations in terms of organizational culture and structure. Wickberg asserts that the principles behind the Hong Men bodies were brotherhood and universalism as opposed to social hierarchy. Hence, they did not stress the “rightness of social inequality” and “deference to elders” as much as other traditional associations. Values such as group loyalty, righteous action, “muscular patriotism” (with reference to China), and ethnic solidarity derived from the fraternal principle.³⁷¹ Straaton in her research on the Vancouver branch of the Hong Men Society too notes that Hong Men supporters promote universalistic ideals like “benevolence” (仁) and “justice” (義).³⁷²

The Chinese Times, for instance, had this promotional motto next to its title on the front page – “Eliminating the Treacherous [or Villainous] through

³⁷⁰ Wickberg, “Overseas Chinese Adaptive Organizations,” pp. 71-76.

³⁷¹ Wickberg, “Overseas Chinese Adaptive Organizations,” p. 73.

³⁷² Straaton, p. 67.

Righteousness and Heroism” (義俠除奸). During the debate over the recognition of the PRC, the Hong Men supporters used this slogan to attack the pro-PRC faction in Vancouver Chinatown. From their black-versus-white perspective, the radical leftists and dissenters within the Hong Men were the villains who had to be destroyed.³⁷³ At the same time, the pundits in the Chinese Times also tried to bring unity into the fracturing organization and local Chinese community by telling readers that they had to adhere to the virtue of “brotherly love” (兄弟要相愛).

According to them, the “revival and expansion of the Hong Men Society” (復興洪門) was inseparable to the “commitment to save the [home] country” (忠誠救國).

Moreover, the commentators believed that all overseas Chinese belong to one big family (僑社家庭), so they would not tolerate divisions and disputes, especially the ones caused by the alleged leftists.³⁷⁴ Overall, the culture of brotherhood was an influential factor in the development of the Hong Men organization’s popular nationalist ideology or position.

In addition to the fraternal bond, the historical origin and original membership of the Hong Men Society explains the organization’s support for the Republic of China. Most secondary sources maintain that Chinese laborers and miners founded Canada’s first Hong Men Society in the mining town of Barkerville, British Columbia, in 1863. Many of these Chinese migrant laborers

³⁷³ For an example, see Chinese Times, 6 July 1970, p. 3.

³⁷⁴ For examples, see Chinese Times, 6 July 1970, p. 3; and Chinese Times, 10 October 1970, p. 4.

had journeyed from California in search of gold, and they had joined the same kind of secret society there. Living in a hostile and strange environment, the migrant laborers created bonds of brotherhood and fictive kinship. They also established a rudimentary and clandestine authority that made sure problems among Chinese settlers were resolved inside their community. Though the Hong Men association in Barkerville became extinct, it inspired branch organizations in other areas of British Columbia. The different chapters eventually became connected when members started swearing loyalty to multiple chapters whether or not they were initially affiliated.³⁷⁵ In 1892, Chinese laborers, small merchants, and shopkeepers established the Vancouver branch of the Hong Men Society, which was then called the “Zhihongtang” or “Chee Kung Tong”. Stanley found that the “membership [of the Zhihongtang] was accordingly the lowest common denominator among migrants of varied origins.”³⁷⁶ Stanley also compares the Zhihongtang with the Knights of Labor, a counterpart for the white laborers.³⁷⁷ Overall, Zhihongtang, which was the forerunner of the Hong Men Society or Chinese Freemasons, catered to the bachelor migrant workers. This group made up the majority of the Chinese immigrant population before the Second World

³⁷⁵ The founder of the Barkerville branch, Huang Shengui, was a member of the Hong Men Society before he left China. See Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 30-36; Ng, pp. 13-14; Straaton, pp. 67-71; and Stanley, pp. 488, 500.

³⁷⁶ Stanley, p. 488.

³⁷⁷ “Knights of Labor” was a union and fraternal group for white workers. It organized workers by industry and flourished first in the US and then Canada during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Both Knights of Labor and Zhihongtang had secret rituals and were generally exclusive to their respective ethnic group or race. However, the Knights of Labor at the turn of the 20th century vehemently opposed Chinese immigration because they saw Chinese workers as economic competitors who could drive wages down. In 1886, for instance, the Knights of Labor started campaigns to expel Chinese from Vancouver and Victoria, and the campaigns resulted in a riot in Vancouver’s old Chinatown. See Stanley, p. 488; and Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 54-55, 61-62. Also see R. Douglas Francis, Richard Jones & Donald B. Smith, Destinies: Canadian History since Confederation (Toronto: Harcourt Canada, 2000), p. 165

War. The fraternity ideal of the Hong Men Society additionally underscored the collective experience of the struggling Chinese laborers.

Though mainly poor and uneducated, the Chinese workers were also very politically active and had a strong dislike of the dynastic regime in China.³⁷⁸ Like their counterparts in China and Southeast Asia, most of the Hong Men bodies in North America opposed the Qing government long before the emergence of the Chinese nationalist movement.³⁷⁹ While the Zhigongtang at first was mainly subversive rather than nationalistic, it transformed itself with the introduction of Sun Yat-sen and his ideology. The members of the Zhigongtang were very receptive of Sun's platform, which was to overthrow the autocratic government run by the Manchu minority and replace it with a democratic government run by the Han-Chinese majority. The Zhigongtang initially was interested in the Empire Reform Association, which was led by Kang Youwei and supported by local Chinese merchant elites. However, it changed its position with the emergence of Sun Yat-sen's Revolutionary Alliance, which attracted the younger elements of the community.³⁸⁰ Additionally, Sun had been a member of the Hong Men organization in Honolulu since 1904, and he had used this triad network extensively to further his cause. Stanley's study of the Empire Reform Association however also notes that Kang Youwei had joined the Zhigongtang

³⁷⁸ Wang Gungwu, From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy, pp. 67-69.

³⁷⁹ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, p. 30.

³⁸⁰ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 73-76, 101-106. Also see Stanley, pp. 481-485.

despite its anti-Manchu view.³⁸¹ Nonetheless, the Empire Reform Association lost its rationale and support when the Qing Dynasty fell in 1911.³⁸²

Stanley asserts that Kang's ability to mobilize Zhigongtang members, or "the sworn enemies of the dynasty," reflected the strong patriotic feelings in the Vancouver Chinese community in the early 1900s.³⁸³ The evolution of Zhigongtang up to this period furthermore showed that the forces of class-based politics and nationalism had created an overseas Chinese identity.

For instance, the political division in Vancouver Chinatown in the early 1900s correlated to the socioeconomic backgrounds of the migrants. The wealthy Chinese merchants supported the Qing Dynasty and later the Empire Reform Association in exchange for protection of their overseas interests and for offices in the Qing bureaucracy. Though the Empire Reform Association for a while appealed to all overseas Chinese, Sun Yat-sen's Revolutionary Alliance eventually surpassed it in popularity because the Revolutionary Alliance gained the support of the working class migrants, many of whom had joined the Hong Men bodies.³⁸⁴ Along with the Hong Men bodies' opposition to the Manchu rule, most overseas Chinese, like their compatriots in China, probably gave up on the Qing government because it had failed to maintain social order. It also failed to maintain state sovereignty in face of the imperialist powers, which were slowly

³⁸¹ Pan, pp. 124-127; and Stanley, p. 488.

³⁸² Pan, pp. 124-127; and Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 101-106. After the fall of Qing Dynasty, the Empire Reform Association became the Constitutionalist Party, or Xianzhengdang. It declared itself as the opposition to the KMT.

³⁸³ Pan, pp. 124-127; and Stanley, p. 488.

³⁸⁴ Stanley, pp. 475-476, 481-485, 488, 500. Also see Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 73-77.

invading China. Those who supported Sun's movement too hoped that they would receive offices in the new republican government.³⁸⁵

Overall, class has some influence in Chinatown politics, primarily in the aspect of organizational affiliation. It furthermore contributes to the Hong Men Society's popular nationalism and muscular patriotism, which the Chinese Times had expressed in its editorials. The class division, along with regional and political division and historical animosity, might also explain the tension between the Hong Men organization and the KMT in Vancouver Chinatown in the postwar period. As mentioned before, some criticized the KMT as an organization as being controlled by the Mandarin-speaking party cadres and Chinatown elites.

Nationalism in conjunction with racism in the host society brought the Chinese immigrants together. Stanley points out that the Chinese who came to Canada in the 19th century had no overarching or national identity. They instead carried parochial identities based on their lineages, geographic origins, and dialects. The migrants relied on their respective district or dialect groups for support in Canada, and the parochial identities determined the settlement pattern well into the 20th century.³⁸⁶ Moreover, the majority of migrants from Guangdong Province saw themselves as the descendents of the people who came to southern China during the Tang and Song Dynasty. They thus initially called themselves the "*Tangren*" or "People of Tang" rather than Han Chinese, which was a term reserved for the population in northern China (excluding the Manchu

³⁸⁵ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, p. 104.

³⁸⁶ Stanley, pp. 479-480.

and other ethnic groups).³⁸⁷ Hence, the South China immigrants at first did not define themselves as a homogenous ethnic group.

The growth of the Hong Men bodies and the emergence of the nationalist movements at the turn of the 20th century had created commonalities among the Chinese migrants. The Hong Men bodies, Empire Reform Association, and Revolutionary Alliance all created followings that cut across parochial boundaries.³⁸⁸ The overseas Chinese identity that they created also became the main framework for politicking in the migrant communities. Furthermore, the racial characterization of the Chinese people in the mainstream, English-Canadian politics and culture contributed to the creation of a Chinese racial identity, which complemented a Chinese historical identity. The migrants, who encountered harsh discriminations and stereotypes, convinced themselves that they were proud “Chinamen” regardless of their differences in languages or localities.³⁸⁹ In response to the racism in host society, they segregated themselves as racial group as well. Nonetheless, the parochial identities that helped the migrants to survive and organize in the host country remained and complemented the national and class identities.

Overall, the Hong Men Society's nationalist discourse reflected the origin and original membership and affected the position of the Chinese Times during the debate over the recognition of the PRC, in spite of the changes in the Vancouver Chinese community from the late 1800s to 1970s. The muscular

³⁸⁷ Stanley, pp. 479-480.

³⁸⁸ Stanley, pp. 481, 488.

³⁸⁹ Stanley, pp. 490-491.

patriotism and anti-Manchu sentiment (or Han chauvinism) of this nationalist discourse however had an even wider historical and cultural context. Specifically, the Hong Men Society, which was based on the fraternal and conspiratorial organizations in South China, had a tradition of rebellion.³⁹⁰ This tradition of rebellion galvanized the Zhigongtang to participate in the 1911 Revolution, which further shaped the politics of the Hong Men supporters (especially the old-timers of the organization). Though the Hong Men Society had no clear program on building the Chinese nation-state since its participation in the 1911 Revolution,³⁹¹ its members were constantly engaged in the imagination of the Chinese nation. This imagining process combined the elements of past and future. It also combined the “myths” from the Hong Men Society’s narrative and the actual experiences from the Hong Men Society’s participation in the nationalist movement. Hence, the Chinese Times continued this nationalist discourse during the recognition debate by intertwining stories about anti-Manchu resistance and founding of the Republic of China. These accounts formed a grand and boastful record that defined the Hong Men Society and overseas Chinese.

The tradition of rebellion began in the frontier and coastal regions of South China. The Chinese empire did not fully incorporate the areas now known Guangdong and Fujian until the Ming and Qing period. The Chinese population in South China, which initially came from the northern part of the country, had been constantly on the move. There were internal migrations due to various reasons, such as searching for arable land and escaping from crises (i.e. communal

³⁹⁰ Ng, p. 14.

³⁹¹ Stanley, p. 488.

conflicts, natural disasters and wars).³⁹² There were also emigrations out of the Chinese empire. Private traders and adventurers had operated in coastal China and Southeast Asia since the 15th century. They often operated in defiance of the central or imperial government, which controlled foreign trade through the tribute system and the bazaars in the imperial capital.³⁹³ By the 19th century, the rural population, which consisted mainly of tenants, started to emigrate en masse because of population pressure, heavy taxation, and widespread banditry (following several large-scale rebellions like the 1851-1864 Taiping Uprising).³⁹⁴

Overall, these migration patterns and fluid socioeconomic situations created an ambivalent and at times hostile relationship between the imperial state and communities in South China. The imperial government had long regarded the communities in Guangdong as being on the periphery of Chinese politics and culture.³⁹⁵ The local communities in turn were relatively autonomous and disliked interference from the imperial government. The lineage organizations and gentry class acted as a buffer between the rural population and the state. Though the state relied on gentries and lineage organizations, it was also suspicious of them because of their power over the peasants.³⁹⁶

³⁹² Maurice Freedman, Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwantung (New York: Humanities Press Inc., 1971), pp. 5-6. Freedman's work provides a detailed anthropological study on the lineage organizations in South China. In their development, the overseas Chinese organizations had incorporated some aspects of the social organizations in China, but they were not exact replicas.

³⁹³ Pan, pp. 5-6.

³⁹⁴ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 5-10.

³⁹⁵ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 7-10.

³⁹⁶ Freedman, pp. 29-30, 68-79, 105-106, 169-181.

Moreover, the imperial government generally had a “continental mindset” and controlled the coastal communities by banning private trade and emigration.³⁹⁷

A more subversive theme in South China was the undercurrent of popular resentment against the Qing Dynasty. The Qing Dynasty originated from an alliance of Manchu people and other tribes in northeastern China. Through mainly military conquests, the Manchu people assumed control of the Chinese imperial state following the collapse of the Ming Dynasty in 1644. The Manchu rulers extended the border of China farther than ever before and underwent rapid acculturation. Despite the achievements and duration of the Qing Dynasty, the Chinese population, particularly in the southern regions, saw the Manchu as a barbaric minority ruling over a civilized majority. Like the Ming, the Qing government was highly suspicious of the communities in South China and Southeast Asia. In opposition, the Chinese in the south saw the Manchu people as invaders and continuously resisting the Qing government, which implemented harsh measures such as the evacuation of coastal communities and the death penalty for emigrants. Moreover, exiled loyalists to the defunct Ming dynasty had set up bases in the periphery of the empire. Secret societies like the Hong Men were the networks that the Ming loyalists used to mobilize the populace and to stage subversive activities. The desire to restore the Ming and to return to their native places motivated the exiles. They were also driven by an almost racial

³⁹⁷ Wang Gungwu, From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy, pp. 21-37, 45-46. Also see Pan, pp. 5-9.

hatred against the Manchu people, whom they must expel from Chinese territories.³⁹⁸

In general, the population in South China harbored a culture of resistance and ethnic chauvinism since the Manchu conquest. The Hong Men bodies carried this culture, first into the migrant communities in Southeast Asia and then into the ones in North America. Stanley notes that even at the turn of the 20th century, the Chinese immigrants in Vancouver still held an “anti-dynastic” grudge that stemmed from the Manchu’s brutal conquest of Guangdong in the 17th century.³⁹⁹ While these fraternities had various agendas and interests, their collective slogan was “Overthrow the Qing and Restore the Ming” (反清復明). The anti-Manchu stance in combination with the fraternal principle and secret society rituals had made the Hong Men members believe that they belonged to and were fighting for something greater than themselves.⁴⁰⁰

When the Zhigongtang cooperated with the Chinese nationalists in the early 20th century, it transformed its historical animosity against the Qing Dynasty into a national identity, which was initially predicated on the Han-Manchu dichotomy. The Zhigongtang perceived Sun Yat-sen’s movement as a step

³⁹⁸ Pan, pp. 7-9, 20-21. Also see Wang Gungwu, From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy, pp. 31-37, 45-46. In general, the overseas Chinese communities, which were out of the imperial government’s reach, had always been staging grounds for rebellious movements. In the late 19th century, the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia and North America became refuges and bases for nationalist revolutionaries and reformers. Political leaders like Sun Yat-sen and Kang Youwei traveled to wherever there were Chinese communities in order to obtain financial and moral support for their causes. Canada, which had a large Chinese population, was the favorite stopover for Sun and Kang. Before the 1911 Revolution, both Sun and Kang had made three visits to Canada. See Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 73-77, 101-104.

³⁹⁹ Stanley, p. 479.

⁴⁰⁰ Pan, pp. 20-21.

towards fulfilling its agenda that had been transmitted across the world and through many generations. The 1911 Revolution was therefore a turning point for the Zhigongtang as well as the Vancouver Chinese community. The Zhigongtang/Hong Men organization justified its authority on Chinese politics and culture by claiming credit for the founding of the Republic of China. For the prewar generation of the Chinese immigrants, the 1911 Revolution symbolized their power and aspirations. Just before the successful uprising in October 1911, the Chinese communities across Canada had contributed at least 35,000 Canadian dollars to Sun Yat-sen's movement via the Zhigongtang lodges. The branch organizations in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal had even mortgaged their headquarter buildings. During Sun's third visit to Canada in January 1911, thousands of people in Vancouver enthusiastically attended his lectures, which took place at Zhigongtang hall.⁴⁰¹ After the collapse of Qing, a monument was built in Guangzhou city, Guangdong, where a failed uprising took place in March 1911. The names of cities and towns in western Canada were inscribed on this monument.⁴⁰²

Overall, the Hong Men supporters and old-timers in Vancouver Chinese community asserted that they had an important, collective role in the development of modern China. They drew common experiences and interests from their participation in the 1911 Revolution as well as in the subsequent National Salvation campaigns during the 1937-1945 Sino-Japanese War. Though

⁴⁰¹ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, pp. 102-103. Also see Stanley, p. 500.

⁴⁰² Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, p. 103. This uprising was also known as the Huang Hua Kang Uprising.

the Chinese immigrants in general could afford only small donations to the nationalist cause, they believed that collectively their contributions mattered a lot. The result of these events was identification with the Chinese nation and patriotic devotion to the Republic of China.

The editorial series “Is the ROC the Legitimate Home Country for the Hong Men?” reflected the Hong Men Society’s enduring nationalist ideology, which was a bizarre mixture of dynastic loyalty (to Ming), culture of resistance, ethnic pride, and revolutionary experience. To assert the indiscernible but undeniable linkage between the Hong Men Society and the ROC, the editorial referred to the mythical origin of the Hong Men Society in China more than three hundred years ago. The editorial claimed that that the Hong Men Society began with the martyrdom of Wan Yun Long. According to the Chinese Times, Wan was a Ming loyalist who launched a failed rebellion against Manchu rule in 1735. After his death, the remnants of his force scattered across China and established “underground contacts” (密語聯絡) that eventually became the Hong Men Society. The contemporary Hong Men organization in Vancouver thus regarded Wan as their “common ancestor and eldest brother” (先烈達宗萬雲龍大哥). Following in his path, the Hong Men Society then joined the Taiping Rebellion and afterwards Sun Yat-sen’s Revolutionary Alliance.⁴⁰³

The editorial further claimed that the Hong Men Society, and specifically the Vancouver chapter, was instrumental in the success of the 1911 Revolution.

⁴⁰³ Chinese Times, 9 October 1970, p. 3.

The third and fourth installment of the editorial made several bold statements regarding this claim, such as “there would have been no ROC without the Hong Men Society” (無洪門即無中華民國).⁴⁰⁴ An editor for the Chinese Times also “declared to all under the Heaven” (昭告天下而言曰) that the “Vancouver Zhigongtang initiated, supported, and carried out” the Wuchang insurrection on 10 October 1911 (是乃加拿大卑詩省雲高華埠洪門致公堂大漢報所發起, 所贊助, 所造成也).⁴⁰⁵ The editor further asserted that Vancouver and San Francisco collected the funds raised by the Hong Men bodies in North America, and the total funds raised in North America exceeded those raised in Southeast Asia.⁴⁰⁶

The editorial therefore argued that celebrating the anniversary of the ROC and waving the ROC flag were activities that acknowledged the Hong Men Society’s great sacrifices for the Chinese nation. Only the ROC flag could symbolize the victory of the anti-Manchu force as well as the “bloody retribution” (討還血債, 一雪義憤) in the name of the ancient Hong Men founder.⁴⁰⁷ The editorial moreover derided the pro-PRC radicals and dissidents in the Hong Men

⁴⁰⁴ Chinese Times, 14 October 1970, p. 3.

⁴⁰⁵ Chinese Times, 13 October 1970, p. 3.

⁴⁰⁶ Chinese Times, 14 October 1970, p. 3.

⁴⁰⁷ Chinese Times, 10 October 1970, p. 3

Society for not knowing the difference between supporting the national flag and supporting a particular party, like the KMT.⁴⁰⁸

The Chinese Times' account on the Hong Men Society's long and violent history of nationalist struggle was meant to inspire readers rather than to present factual arguments. Furthermore, the Hong Men Society saw itself as the pioneer of the Chinese nation by claiming to have a patriotic or nationalist agenda or culture hundreds of years ago. It preceded the Chinese Nationalists and Communists in time and significance. Overall, the Chinese Times in bringing up the Hong Men's past was making an incredible self-positioning in the Vancouver Chinese community. The newspaper was clinging to its political and cultural authority in defining "Chinese-ness" in face of divisive forces in the contemporary period. These forces included generation gap, integrationist pressure, postwar immigration, and Mainland-Taiwan division.

The editorial series on the legitimacy of the ROC and the history of the Hong Men Society was an example of constructing identity through rituals. Ng observes that the old-timers during the postwar period regularly expressed "obsessive nostalgia about the Old World," "desire for internal unity," and "claim of accomplishments and greatness for their organizations." While their memories and ideals appeared unrealistic and rhetorical, the older generation of immigrants were articulating their identity and fostering a sense of community.⁴⁰⁹ The

⁴⁰⁸ Chinese Times, 10 October 1970, p. 3. In all fairness, the Nationalist Party emblem - a bright white sun in blue sky - is also a part of the ROC flag (vice versa the PRC flag incorporates symbols of the communist movement, such as the stars and red backdrop).

⁴⁰⁹ Ng, pp. 60-67.

homage to the Hong Men's legendary founder, for instance, had a strong religious or ritualistic overtone.⁴¹⁰

“Is the ROC the Legitimate Home Country?” and other commentaries described the nation-building as a long violent conflict that required martial spirit and willingness to make sacrifices. For example, the Chinese Times asserted that the ROC was like a “Great Wall of flesh and blood” (血肉築的長城) because it was built on countless wars and battles. The newspaper further asserted that the Hong Men supporters had given their livelihoods and lives for the nationalist cause, and they had “written a magnificent history with [their] blood” (用血寫成之光輝歷史). The Chinese Times then condemned the supporters of the PRC for trying to tear down this Great Wall and dishonoring those who gave up their lives and wealth for their home country.⁴¹¹

Overall, these rhetorical arguments were again manifestations of muscular patriotism. The emphasis on the violent past allowed the Hong Men members and the older generation of immigrants to vicariously experience the nationalist struggle. Although some overseas Chinese had returned to China to serve their country or government, most had remained abroad. The older generation of immigrants thus did not want to be left out of the nationalist narrative by being on the “sideline” of political conflicts in China. They also did not want to lose their

⁴¹⁰ Ng also points out that the Hong Men Society/Chinese Freemasons regularly worshipped their founder and “took great pride in their teaching of loyalty and righteous behaviors.” He further suggests that the organization had “stronger religious flavor” than other organizations. See Ng, pp. 64-65.

⁴¹¹ For examples, see Chinese Times, 10 October 1970, p. 4; and 15 October 1970, p. 3.

collective identity when they turned from temporary migrants to permanent settlers in their host country.

The Chinese Times editorials additionally showed that identity discourses are dynamic, and nationalist ideology contains ambiguities and contradictions. The Hong Men Society's definition of the Chinese nationalists and patriots commenced with the anti-Manchu and Ming restoration doctrine. This doctrine then took on ethnic and racial characteristics. The Chinese nationalists consistently belonged to the Han ethnic group and their goals were to reclaim territories that were allegedly theirs (復漢還我江山) and to "protect the moral, upright spirit of the nation" (為我民族保正氣).⁴¹² The definition then evolved to become less exclusive. The contemporary Chinese nationalists according the Chinese Times wanted to create a harmonious union of the five ethnic groups (五族共和) in modern China, which inherited vast territorial holding of the Qing Dynasty. This union would include the Manchu people, and it would be based on a shared history and culture of five thousand years.⁴¹³

The Chinese Times simultaneously looked forward and backward in time as it constructed its nationalist discourse. The newspaper for instance connected Wan Yun Long's anti-Manchu rebellion in 1735 with the 1911 Revolution. It also

⁴¹² Chinese Times, 9 October 1970, p. 3.

⁴¹³ Chinese Times, 16 October 1970, p. 3. The five major or official ethnic groups in modern China are Han, Manchu, Mongol, Uygur, and Tibetan. This categorization dated back to Qing period. Sun Yat-sen used it to reconcile the Han-Chinese nationalism with claims to Manchuria, Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet.

compared their ideal of a modern Chinese republic with the great dynasties of the ancient past. They assumed that the “kingly way” (王道), as explained by the ancient philosophers like Confucius and Mencius, was compatible with Sun Yat-sen’s Three People’s Principles.⁴¹⁴ The republican values such as democracy and social welfare were embodied in a quote from Mencius: “putting the common people first, the nation second, and the ruler last” (民為貴, 社稷次之, 君為輕).⁴¹⁵

Although the Chinese Communist Party and its supporters described the PRC as the most progressive government in the contemporary period (or the “people’s century”), the Hong Men Society believed that they had betrayed the Chinese political and cultural traditions. The Chinese Times made this point clear in its editorial on the possibility of an overseas Chinese coalition.

Our lovable, majestic and incomparably great China! Our pitiful Chinese nation that has been scattered to the four corners of the world! There are still some among us, such as the unrepentant communist cadres and their servile adherents, who loudly proclaim that our country is entering the most fortunate and glorious dynastic period ever. Are we at the end of our country’s progress? No, a thousand no...⁴¹⁶

我們可愛的而又莊嚴無比的大中國啊, 我們可憐的而又四處流亡的大中華民族啊, 我們一些『迷途尚未知返』而仍在高嚷著這是個『前無古人無來者』的最光輝『最幸福的中國朝代』的共幹或尾巴先生啊, 難道我們的中國的『進步』就此就停止了麼? 不, 幾千個不...⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁴ Chinese Times, 29 September 1970, p. 3; and 16 October 1970, p. 3.

⁴¹⁵ Chinese Times, 7 July 1970, p. 2. Also see Chinese Times, 29 September 1970, p. 3.

⁴¹⁶ Chinese Times, 16 October 1970, p. 3.

⁴¹⁷ Chinese Times, 16 October 1970, p. 3.

In summary, the Vancouver branch of the Hong Men Society cherished its experiences and imaginations pertaining to Chinese nationalism and ancient secret societies. For the old-timers of the Hong Men association, there was not much difference between their national identity and their organizational identity. This connection therefore prevented the organization from readily abandoning its allegiance to the ROC when Canada established ties with the PRC. The Vancouver chapter in particular could not radically reinterpret itself without making some symbolic protests.

Led by the aging, first generation immigrants from South China, the Vancouver chapter on one hand argued that supporting the ROC stood for genuine and apolitical patriotism. On the other hand, the founding of the ROC became the justification for the organization's continued existence, and the Hong Men supporters threw themselves into the factional conflict over homeland politics and the recognition of the PRC. Furthermore, the old guards in the Vancouver Hong Men association believed that the overseas Chinese community should be included in Chinese nationalist history. During the recognition controversy, the Chinese Times intended to educate the "wayward youths" and Canadian-born elements in the local Chinese community about this nationalist narrative. The editorials in the newspaper showed that the process of the imagination of China had transcended geographical and temporal boundaries. For this reason, the Hong Men Society/Chinese Freemasons fervently defended their political beliefs, cultural traditions, and ritualistic activities in 1970.

During the recognition controversy, the Chinese Times did not openly clash with the Chinatown News over such issues as the official home government or the history of Chinese in Canada. Both publications actually had similarities in their coverage of Canada-China ties. Nonetheless, the Chinese Times' outbursts of national and Hong Men pride were implicit attempts to stifle the emerging challenges to the political and cultural discourse in Vancouver Chinatown, be they from the leftists or the *tusheng*.

The second and third generation Chinese residents during the postwar period were gradually entering the Canadian mainstream and embracing multiculturalism. Chinese-Canadian representatives like Roy Mah were eagerly dissociating culture and ethnicity from citizenship and nationality. Likewise, rituals associated with the founding of the Hong Men Society and the ROC seemed odd, outdated, and unsuitable in the Canadian environment. As discussed earlier, the Chinatown News depicted the early Chinese immigrants as the pioneers of the Canadian nation. They built and served this country by being railway workers, manual laborers, small merchants, and soldiers (in the Second World War).⁴¹⁸ The Chinatown News was thus more concerned about struggling for equality and justice in Canada than about delivering China from imperialism and internal chaos. In contrast, the Chinese Times constantly showed itself as being historically patriotic to the home country. It regarded the early immigrants as pioneers too, but of the Chinese nation and the republic regime. Hence, the older

⁴¹⁸ See Chinatown News, 18 July 1971.

generation of immigrants and their Canadian-born descendents held different assumptions and narratives about their ethnic group overall.

4.4 Lost Sojourners and Soulless Youths: the Responses of the Old-timers to the Changes in the Chinese-Canadian Community

The editorials of the Chinese Times during the recognition debate not only presented and defended the Hong Men organization's politics, but they also discussed what it meant to be Chinese for the immigrants and their descendents. The newspaper presented a nationalistic overseas Chinese (*huaqiao*) identity, which incorporated as well as modified the sojourner ideals. As mentioned earlier, the immigrants who followed the sojourning way were essentially transients. They expected to return to China when they became successful abroad or when the homeland's situation had improved. The intense institutional and popular racism in North America before the Second World War also turned the Chinese immigrants into sojourners. The "sojourner" was thus a stereotypical label as well. Nonetheless, the sojourner mentality and associated values were not just racist construct. Con and Wickberg's study stated that before the Chinese came to North America, the "expectations and patterns of sojourning migration were well-established" in China and Southeast China. Strong ties to the native place and the remittance system were entrenched the Chinese culture.⁴¹⁹

The culture of sojourning was not static. The Chinese expatriates had to reinterpret it as they encountered events such as the 1909 nationality law, the

⁴¹⁹ Wickberg, ed., From China to Canada, p. 6.

Sino-Japanese War, and the Mainland-Taiwan division. Wang Gungwu finds that since World War II, the overseas Chinese started to define the sojourner as a justification to stay abroad. Wang asserts that while patriotism and tradition supposedly obliged Chinese immigrants to return to their homeland, immigrants in reality preferred to remain in their host countries because they had a better life there. Consequently, good sojourners would commit themselves to maintain the Chinese culture in their communities. They would moreover learn and profit from foreigners, and bring knowledge and resources back to China whenever possible. However, Wang Gungwu notes that not all postwar immigrants perceived themselves as sojourners because they were adapting to their local environments and “torn between various kinds of loyalties.”⁴²⁰

The Chinese Times subscribed to the sojourning ethics and sought to impose these moral values on the Vancouver Chinese community during the recognition debate. For example, the editorial on the formation of an overseas Chinese coalition reminded the community, particularly the younger generations, of their China-bound obligations.⁴²¹ Those who did not want to bear the responsibility were described as disloyal and un-Chinese. Whereas the Chinatown News applauded the PRC government for not taking a “fatherland role,”⁴²² the Chinese Times worried about de-legitimization of the ROC government that had always taken on the fatherland role.

⁴²⁰ Wang, From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy, pp. 73-75.

⁴²¹ Chinese Times, 16-17 October 1970, p. 3.

⁴²² Chinatown News, 3 October 1971, pp. 3, 58.

Furthermore, the Chinese Times set itself up as the authentic voice of the immigrant population, though it acknowledged that the immigrants were not homogenous and in conflicts with each other. Ng's study for instance shows that the postwar immigrants hated the impractical formality, political partisanship, and cultural backwardness of the older settlers. The critics also attacked the Chinatown leaders for tolerating poor living conditions and economic exploitation in their community. They also believed that the leadership intended to control the younger generations. The old-timers reacted to these criticisms with "outrage and alienation." They counter-argued that some newcomers lacked ethics and stamina to tolerate the kind of hardship that they themselves had endured. The old-timers further attacked the immigrant youths for their "extravagant" lifestyle and their alleged willingness to totally embrace the Western society.⁴²³ The growing tension between the older generation of immigrants and the younger generations came to the fore in the newspaper war.

For example, at the height of the newspaper war, the Chinese Times carried a letter written by an avid reader who also happened to be an immigrant from Hong Kong. In this letter, the author "urged the overseas community to stop leftists' rumor mongering" (呼籲僑胞聲討左仔造謠惑眾). Moreover, the author praised the Chinese Times not only for its "fair reporting" (言論公正) but also for its close identification with the immigrants. He claimed that the Hong Men editorials brought tears to his eyes because his life experience as an immigrant

⁴²³ Ng, pp. 25-31.

was exactly like theirs. The Da Zhong Bao, in contrast, was “a small press out of nowhere” (無地址出版的小報) and had “brought shame to their compatriots” (實為僑胞所恥). If the leftists did not like Canada, he argued, then they should give up their Canadian citizenship and go live in the “Hell” (地獄) created by Mao Zedong.⁴²⁴

Another fan mail, which was titled “I too Spit on the Leftist Demons” (我也來吐苦水並聲討左鬼) passed even harsher judgments on the radical youths of the local Chinese community. The author, who assumed the name of an ancient Daoist called “Heavenly Master Zhang” (張天師), wrote that the leftists were similar to demonic beings. They “were without parents, and they recognized no relatives except the worm known as Mao Zedong, whom they called their ancestor” (左鬼無父無母, 六親不認, 毛虫是他們的祖宗). Master Chan furthermore claimed that nine out ten Chinese residents in Vancouver had a grudge against Mao that was “as deep as an ocean of blood” (血海的深仇), so the leftists would not be able to convince them to support the PRC. The author concluded that the wayward youths should “get normal jobs and be content and quiet” (安份守己, 找個正當作業). They then would receive forgiveness from their righteous

⁴²⁴ Chinese Times, 22 July 1970, p. 2.

compatriots and continue to enjoy their comfortable lifestyle, residing in Western style houses and driving fancy cars.⁴²⁵

In general, these letters showed that the Hong Men pundits, representing longtime immigrants of the older generation, were resisting to the political direction of the new arrivals and maturing Canadian-born residents. The emerging force wanted a different direction in the political and cultural development of the local Chinese community. By lecturing on the correct behavior and duties of the immigrants, the Chinese Times tried to stifle those who held heterodox views.

The older generation moreover demanded respect and obedience from the younger generations. Shortly following the Canadian recognition of the PRC, the Chinese Times put out two editorials that openly disparaged the youths of the overseas Chinese community. The editorials accused the youths of “losing their souls” (失魂) and “being un-filial” (不孝).⁴²⁶ The “brothers and uncles” of the Hong Men association wondered why the youths became “prejudiced, stubborn, and audacious” (偏見, 血氣方剛, 固執).⁴²⁷ The old-timers further felt that the youths had lost their sense of right and wrong, as in the debate over Chinese politics, and that the youths were “neglecting the elderly” (遺棄老人) in the community because they had fallen under the spells of materialism and the welfare state.

⁴²⁵ Chinese Times, 15 July 1970, p. 2.

⁴²⁶ Chinese Times, 19 & 27 October 1970, p. 3.

⁴²⁷ Chinese Times, 19 October 1970, p. 2.

Consequently, the immigrants of the older generation, many of whom had toiled their entire lives, would die alone and in a deplorable state.⁴²⁸

The Chinese Times additionally described the youth activists as being “hysteric” (歇斯低里症) as well as having a “Boxer” (義和團) mentality because they constantly engaged in demonstrations and made unreasonable demands.⁴²⁹ The commentator for the newspaper claimed that the arrogant activists were all trying to be heroes in the local Chinese community, but like the communist intelligentsia, their zeal and rashness would be their undoing.⁴³⁰ Overall, the controversy surrounding the Canadian recognition of the PRC exposed the generation gap in the Vancouver Chinese community. Various social and cultural concerns were a part of this generation gap besides organizational and homeland politics.

The Chinese Times did not totally blame the new immigrants and Canadian-born group for the problems in the Hong Men organization and in the local Chinese community. It also pointed a finger at some old *huaqiao* (老僑) residents who allegedly “betrayed their friends for monetary gains” (貪錢財而不惜出賣朋友) or “had become full of hate because they had suffered racial prejudice”

⁴²⁸ Chinese Times, 27 October 1970, p. 2.

⁴²⁹ Chinese Times, 19 October 1970, p. 3. The Boxers were another religious and secret society that became popular in China at the turn of the 20th century. They launched a failed insurrection to expel foreigners from China in 1899 and 1900. As result, the European powers, Japan and the United States sent a combined force to destroy the Boxers, whose activities the Qing government sanctioned. When the rebellion ended, the eight countries that sent the international force imposed a humiliating treaty and a huge indemnity on China. The background on the Boxers comes from R. R. Palmer & Joel Colton, A History of the Modern World, Eighth Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), pp. 678-681

⁴³⁰ Chinese Times, 19 October 1970, p. 3.

(被歧視欺負而充滿仇恨). The Chinese Times additionally made charges against some “formerly learned” (原來有知識) individuals. The newspaper claimed that these “soulless” people were “misinformed and misguided by villains” (誤信謠言為奸人致使).⁴³¹ It however was actually expressing dissatisfaction at the kind of politics that the younger generations were pursuing, like grass root activities. It furthermore showed the Chinatown elders’ fear or bitterness of being eventually supplanted by the promising leaders of *tusheng* or new immigrant background.

Another important element of the sojourning ethics in the postwar period was the image of melancholic and pessimistic exiles. The editorials of the Chinese Times perpetuated this image, whether or not the immigrants voluntarily came to Canada. In constructing the exiles, the newspaper evoked the beauty of the culture and physical environment of the homeland. The newspaper then juxtaposed the aesthetic imagination with the dismal outlook of Chinese politics and society. This combination implied a strong longing for the homeland.

The editorial on the need for an overseas Chinese coalition, for example, stated that the picturesque and enduring sceneries of China’s natural environment served as a source of pride not only for the overseas Chinese and their descendents (大好河山, 還是轟立昂揚, 江山如畫, 不獨我華裔子孫以此為自傲). The editorial also lamented that the migrants were “forgotten orphans, without a

⁴³¹ Chinese Times, 19 October 1970, p. 3.

real home or country” (被遺忘的孤兒, 無國無家). Thus, they were “constantly yearning for their native land” (冥思故土).⁴³²

The exiles' pessimism towards the state of China was well reflected in the Chinese Times editorials. As discussed earlier, the pro-PRC groups in the local Chinese community often angrily denounced the Chinese Times' negative portrayal of China's political, socioeconomic and cultural development. The radicals argued that biases in the Chinatown establishment suppressed ethnic pride. On the other side, the old-timers were personally affected by the communist rule when they received news from their native places about the collectivization of land and revolutionary chaos.⁴³³ They thought that the radicals were being fooled by propaganda and had yet to be disillusioned. Wong Foon Sien summed up the general disappointment and occasional panic from the old-timers in an interview with the Globe and Mail in 1951. He claimed that the Vancouver Chinese were “so incensed” with the communist rule in the Mainland that they no longer wanted to continue the tradition of returning the bones of deceased to their native places for burial.⁴³⁴

The editorial series, “What Is the Price of Glory?” (光榮何價問蒼天?), echoed similar sentiment when the recognition of the PRC was impending. The editorial, which appeared in the Chinese Times in the early of October of 1970, was a commentary on the PRC's progress in satellite and missile technology.

⁴³² Chinese Times, 16 October 1970, p. 3.

⁴³³ Lum, p. 226.

⁴³⁴ Lum, p. 226.

The four-part essay was also a response to criticism from the Da Zhong Bao (?) that the Chinese Times was indifferent to the PRC's achievements. The editorial argued that the PRC was just catching up to the rest of the world in science and technology. Moreover, the editorial asserted that the PRC's recent developments in nuclear weaponry and missiles were a meaningless display of national glory because these projects were dangerous and a drain on resources. They satisfied Mao Zedong's ego at the expense of the Chinese people's welfare.⁴³⁵

The Chinese Times' assessments on the PRC and the situation in Mainland China probably became less biased after the recognition. However, the newspaper often perpetuated the scenario of the homeland in crisis or in need. The commentators and reporters acknowledged changes occurring in China, but they did not see progress. The negative characterization of the homeland gave the older generation of immigrants a sense of a higher purpose – to deliver China from its troubles and restore its former glory. Therefore, putting down one's own country was ironically an expression of national pride. The PRC sympathizers as well as non-partisan Canadian-born leaders however did not share this view. The PRC supporters wanted to be proud of their home country, while the Canadian-born elements wanted to be self-assured in their culture and ethnicity. Hence, Roy Mah wrote articles that described China in a very positive light when he accompanied Prime Minister Trudeau in his trip to the PRC in 1973. In his articles, China was open and modern but had not lost its ancient culture and

⁴³⁵ Chinese Times, 5-8 October 1970, p. 3.

beautiful natural environment. Mah wanted to dispel what he believed as misconceptions and a feeling of shame in his community.⁴³⁶

Both the older and younger generation wanted to preserve and expand their culture, but the former group combined culture with politics while the latter group separated them. The polemics of the Chinese Times for instance suggested that the younger generation were culturally deficient or corrupted. The newspaper also asserted the supremacy of the Han-Chinese culture that was associated with the ROC and the Hong Men Society. Its stance was thus the opposite of the Chinatown News, which had advocated culture for culture's sake. The Canadian-born group saw the Canadian recognition of the PRC as a chance for cultural exchange and renewal. The conservative or patriotic Chinese on the other hand saw the event as a blow to their cultural institutions.⁴³⁷

The assertion of the sojourning ethics also reflected what Edgar Wickberg calls the "loss of structural unity" in the overseas Chinese communities.⁴³⁸ As mentioned earlier, the core of the Vancouver Chinese community in the early 1900s consisted of migrants from the same region and of similar, less-than-modest backgrounds. In the period from 1923 to 1947, the community was isolated due to the prohibition against Chinese immigration. At the time, the first and second generation of the Chinese residents also experienced much hardship

⁴³⁶ For Mah's "China dairy" and his reporting of PM Trudeau's activities in the China trip, see various issues of the Chinatown News from October 1973 to January 1974.

⁴³⁷ Ng, pp. 88-93. The KMT supporters in Canada had long opposed cultural exchanges with the PRC. For instance, in 1960, the Toronto's Shing Wah Daily called for a boycott of the Beijing Opera's Canadian tour. When the Globe and Mail criticized the Chinese community's for its negative reaction, the Shing Wah Daily counter-argued that art was never politically neutral and the Beijing Opera was to spread communist propaganda. See Lum, pp. 119-120.

⁴³⁸ Wickberg, "Overseas Chinese Adaptive Organizations," pp. 81-83.

because of the racial discrimination and the Great Depression. In contrast, the Chinese immigrants who came in the 1960s-1970s period and the *tusheng* residents born in the postwar era lived in a relatively more liberal and mobile Canadian society. Hence, the newcomers, who were relatively more educated, urbanized and well off, were able to obtain middle class status and ally with the Canadian-born. The old-timers who still called themselves overseas Chinese conversely might still be weak in English and work in blue-collar jobs (if they had not yet retired). The content of the Chinese Times vis-à-vis the Chinatown News at least indicated the differences between the old-timers and their descendents in areas like background, language and experience. These differences widened the generation rift in the local Chinese community.

Moreover, the immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan brought their versions of Chinese culture and social organization to Canada. They along with the Canadian-born group sought to change the traditional ethnic associations or replace them with their own. The traditional associations had not been in touch with Mainland China since the civil war and were not up-to-date on local issues. Their functions were taken by other organizations and the state, and their values were anachronistic. Geographically, Chinatowns in general were no longer the absolute centers of political, economic and cultural activities.⁴³⁹ The critics of the Vancouver CBA for instance points to its ineffectiveness in protecting Chinatown from urban renewal and its absence in multicultural activities.⁴⁴⁰ Though Wickberg asserts that the longstanding institutions in Chinatown did not fade

⁴³⁹ Wickberg, "Overseas Chinese Adaptive Organizations," pp. 76-83.

⁴⁴⁰ Ng, pp. 60-61, 99, 109-116.

away, they were not as hegemonic as they once were.⁴⁴¹ The debate over the Canadian recognition of the PRC made apparent the tensions in the overseas Chinese community that was expanding and diversifying.

Though Chinese Times initially refused to allow the Hong Men Society and the Vancouver Chinese community to accept the Canadian recognition of the PRC, it eventually gave up. After the Sino-Canadian Communiqué, the local branch of the Hong Men association quickly moved past the partisan politics and joined the movement that sought to revitalize Chinatown and reform its institutions. The response of the Hong Men association was very different from the CBA, which was solely for the interests of the KMT.⁴⁴²

Even before the Sino-Canadian Communiqué, the Chinese Times made pragmatic moves to re-establish harmony in its parent organization and in the local Chinese community. The editorial, “Fighting to Oppose Violence and Defend the Hong Men,” for example, remarked that a lot had changed since the founding of the Hong Men Society. Hence, the organization could not cling to the “feudal and corrupt” past (封建的, 老朽的), and “now was the time for it to renew and reform itself” (也應是革新的時候了). The editorial went on to say that there would be a committee to look over the “organization, structures, and concepts” (組織, 制度, 觀念) of the organization.⁴⁴³

⁴⁴¹ Wickberg, “Overseas Chinese Adaptive Organizations,” pp. 80-81.

⁴⁴² Ng, pp. 75-80, 109-116. Also see Wai, pp. 24-26.

⁴⁴³ Chinese Times, 3 October 1970, p. 3.

Similarly, the statement made by the Hong Men Society's political arm to its Canadian members on October 10 also mentioned a need for a "total change" (徹底變革). The leaders "hoped to turn those within the organization from being unreasonable to reasonable" (把不合理的改成合理,那是本黨歡迎). The statement, which appeared in the Chinese Times, further contended that the Hong Men's political wing will quietly and patiently observe the situation in China and the international scene so as to avoid making enemies. However, the organization's willingness to correct its shortcomings would not come at the expense of the leaders and core members. Moreover, the organization would not permit violence and radicalism that threatened to overthrow the existing order in Chinatown.⁴⁴⁴

Later on, the Chinese Times, like the Chinatown News, called for renewing the goodwill inside the local Chinese community. The newspaper also wanted to reach out to the youths despite its criticisms of them. One loyal reader wrote a letter claiming that the newspaper war was fought among the Hong Men supporters, who besmirched each other to prove their patriotism. Nobody in the organization was an actual sellout to the overseas community. The reader's letter concluded that the Hong Men brothers should "wake up" from their "sleepless daze" (失眠, 醒吧!) and concentrate on the more meaningful tasks ahead.⁴⁴⁵

Likewise, in November 1970, the Chinese Times put out a notice from the Hong Men Athletic Society that celebrated its 45th anniversary as well as the

⁴⁴⁴ Chinese Times, 10 October 1970, p. 4.

⁴⁴⁵ Chinese Times, 20 October 1970, p. 2.

induction of new members. This athletic society was a subsidiary organization that provided recreations for the youths of the community. Ng's study indicated that the athletic society was also a recruitment conduit and an education center that promoted overseas Chinese nationalism.⁴⁴⁶ The author of the notice stated that the Hong Men Society had been waning for several years due to lack of inter-generational communication. The author thus hoped that the old-timers and youths would now "let bygones be bygones" (勿懷舊事). The latter group especially should "energetically work" (發奮圖強) for the organization and their community.⁴⁴⁷ Around the same time, the newspaper also carried a letter from the Chinese-Canadians for a Better Community, which consisted of youth activists who wanted to tackle the social problems in Chinatown.⁴⁴⁸

Overall, the Hong Men Society made compromises because it did not wish to forfeit its place in Vancouver Chinatown and sink into a state of isolation and irrelevance. Additionally, the community as a whole was tired of the conflicts caused by Chinese politics, which had no immediate effects on the immigrants' lives. While the Hong Men supporters disagreed strongly with the youth activists and Canadian-born leaders on the matter of recognition, they agreed that the local issues were paramount. The editorial on the "soulless" members of the community commented that the people in general should "value their lives" (珍惜

⁴⁴⁶ Ng, pp. 27-28.

⁴⁴⁷ Chinese Times, 16 November 1970, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁸ Chinese Times, 30 November 1970, p. 2.

生命生存生活), and any government that safeguarded these two things would be benevolent and democratic.⁴⁴⁹

Nonetheless, the Chinese Times occasionally expressed dissatisfaction towards the PRC well after the recognition. However, it made its opinions ambiguous and subtle. In late November, the newspaper published an editorial series that contended that China, which included ROC and PRC, should not be a part of the UN. The editorial claimed that the UN never respected China, never gave it aid, and would permit the permanent division between Taiwan and Mainland. The Chinese Times even compared the UN with its predecessor, the League of Nations, which had allowed foreign powers to colonize China. This commentary came at the time when the PRC was applying for the admission into the UN with Canada as its sponsor.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁹ Chinese Times, 19 October 1970, p. 3.

⁴⁵⁰ Chinese Times, 21, 23-24 1970, p. 3.

5. Conclusion

The Canadian government established diplomatic relations with the PRC in October 1970 because of Prime Minister Trudeau's desire to make Canada independent from the US in the area of foreign policy as well as to acknowledge that the PRC was the de facto government in the Chinese mainland. The Canadian government also had been working towards a compromise that would allow the PRC to be represented in the UN since the 1960s. Canada's Chinese communities did not have any real influence over Ottawa's decision. However, the reactions from the ethnic Chinese in Canada to the Sino-Canadian Communiqué were much publicized by the mainstream media and Chinese-Canadian media. The recognition of the PRC was a contentious and politicized event that would mobilize the various segments and factions in the ethnic Chinese community as a whole.

The animated coverage of this event in the Chinatown News and Chinese Times reflected changes and continuities in the development of the Chinese community in Canada since the end of the Second World War. The debates and controversies in the two publications were a microcosm of how the Vancouver Chinese community responded to the opening up of Mainland China and the emergence of ethnic politics in the 1960s and 1970s. The recognition of the PRC

came at a time when Canada was experimenting with multiculturalism and when the local-born descendents of the first generation Chinese immigrants were maturing. The recognition was a catalytic event that brought the brewing problems and conflicts in the postwar Chinese community out in the open. These contentious issues included competing versions of Chinese identity and competing views on the functions of the political and cultural institutions of the ethnic community. The representatives of the Canadian-born residents and the postwar immigrants felt that the recognition of the PRC as well as other forces of change would create plurality in Chinese identity and new directions for the ethnic organizations. The representatives of the prewar immigrants and the Chinatown establishments on the other hand wanted to frame the recognition of the PRC as an extension of the factional conflict in Chinatown over homeland politics. The divergent views and aspirations of the conservative old-timers and reform-minded newcomers and Canadian-born representatives immediately clashed. Hence, recognition of the PRC had ushered in a new round of contest for leadership as well as a new round of debate over political and cultural discourse in the Chinese-Canadian community, which was diversifying and expanding.

Since the end of the civil war in China in 1949, the Chinatown of Vancouver, like those in other cities in North America, was dominated by ethnic organizations very closely affiliated with the Chinese Nationalist Party. The rivalry between the Communist-controlled Mainland and KMT-controlled Taiwan had been intermittently played out in Chinatowns, but the support for the KMT and the

Republic of China was generally strong. Canadian recognition of the People's Republic of China was therefore a turning point for the politics and culture in the overseas community. With the fear of communism subsiding and a mood of sympathy rising, the overseas Chinese saw the PRC as an alternative source of national pride and alternative example of national progress (whether or not they actually supported Mao Zedong). Defenders of the status quo were discredited by their longtime connection with the KMT.

Consequently, conflicts among factions aligning with different regimes or ideologies became very fierce during the formalization of China-Canada ties. In the case of Vancouver, the mainstream and ethnic presses could not ignore the intense war-of-words among the radical Da Zhong Bao, the pro-KMT CBA, and the "neutral" Hong Men organization. The Chinatown News, which claimed to be faithfully Canadian, showed jubilation and optimism from the recognition proponents as well as futile resistance from the opponents. The Chinatown News also used its coverage as an opportunity to break the KMT-CBA nexus. The Canadian-born voices in this magazine now made themselves known as intermediaries between the local Chinese community and the mainstream. These voices demanded the ethnic organizations to reduce their engagement in homeland politics and to focus on local issues instead. The Chinese Times, on the other hand, used its coverage of the recognition and its newspaper war with the Da Zhong Bao to find a neutral patriotism. This patriotism would not involve supporting Mao Zedong's regime nor discredit the Hong Men's ties with the early Chinese nationalist movement. Whereas the Chinatown News was disconnecting

Chinese (or Chinese-Canadian) culture from Chinese politics, the Chinese Times was reaffirming the connection. The Chinese Times also tried to establish order and consensus in the organization. As the editorials in this newspaper indicate, the Hong Men members were at odds amongst themselves over the recognition of the PRC. The event had in fact caused an unprecedented crisis in the organization.

Recognition furthermore had a transforming impact on the Chinese community in Canada. It exposed the fissure between the two competing discursive framework that affected how the Chinese minority group saw itself. The first identity framework was the familiar sojourning Chinese national. In this framework, the Chinese residents saw themselves as forever exiles. Besides struggling to survive and retain Chinese culture in the host country, the sojourners also had to choose and develop a modern Chinese political culture that would bring national salvation to their homeland. The development of the sojourner involved not only the immigrants' experiences in the host country but also their imagination of China, which in the 20th century tried to modernize itself as a nation-state but ended up politically and culturally divided. The source of the contention under this framework was whether one chose to align oneself with the government and society of China, Taiwan, or Hong Kong.⁴⁵¹ The conflict between the supporters of the ROC and PRC, which was the focal point of the Chinatown

⁴⁵¹ Similar issues were raised in Wickberg's study on the adaptive organizations. See Wickberg, "Overseas Chinese Adaptive Organizations," pp. 70, 79. Also see Wang, China and the Chinese Overseas, pp. 7-8.

politics during Canada's negotiation with the PRC, underlined this source of contention in the sojourner discourse.

The other identity framework was the Chinese-Canadian identity. Ideally, it derived from the Chinese residents' collective memories and experiences pertaining to their integration into the host country's society, culture, and politics. The Chinese-Canadians saw themselves as settlers, not sojourners, entitled to all the rights and opportunities given to Canadian citizens of other ethnicities. Moreover, they wanted to be a part of the Canadian historical and cultural narrative. Hence, they distanced themselves from the troubles of the Old World, and instead celebrated their integration and acculturation in the New World. However, the Chinese-Canadians at the same time wanted to retain and show off their unique ethnic characteristics and refused to be completely assimilated into the mainstream. The spread of cultural mosaic ideology (or multiculturalism) and political emergence of the local-born Chinese were some of the factors behind the creation of this hyphenated identity in the 1960s and 1970s. The construction of the Chinese-Canadian identity also increased the authority of the local-born Chinese residents in their ethnic community.⁴⁵²

The Chinatown News' coverage on the recognition of the PRC was an example of how the *tusheng* leaders turned the debates on identity and Chinatown politics to their favor. Roy Mah argued that with the recognition of the PRC, the local Chinese community should break away from its ties with the KMT and its vision on the relationship between the homeland and overseas Chinese.

⁴⁵² Ng, p. 106.

Mah further asserted that people in his community had to move their culture and sense of belonging from a remote China to contemporary Canada. The contentious issues in the Chinese-Canadian framework were how to balance the political and cultural interests of the diverse elements and how close should the Chinese-Canadians be to their ancestral land. Chinese-Canadians like Roy Mah did not advocate the same level of cooperation with the PRC government as the CBA used to have with the ROC government. Nonetheless, they became more interested in the culture of Mainland China since 1970.⁴⁵³ Moreover, the Chinese-Canadian leaders approved the PRC's non-interventionist attitude towards the overseas Chinese as well as the progressive aspects of the Mainland society. From the perspective of the Chinatown News, what the PRC offered was complementary to the development of the Chinese-Canadian identity. Overall, the Chinatown News approved the recognition of the PRC and championed the Chinese-Canadian cause.

The Chinese Times, on the other hand, believed that the overseas Chinese community should treasure its sojourner identity and nationalistic political culture. Though the newspaper did not overtly disapprove of the recognition, it was bitterly opposed to giving any kind of support or legitimacy to Mao Zedong's regime. Unlike Roy Mah, the columnists for the Chinese Times saw the PRC-Canada ties as being detrimental to the revival of culture and organizations in the overseas Chinese community, even though there was a growing interest in Mainland China. Moreover, the newspaper was concerned

⁴⁵³ Ng, pp. 114-115.

that acceptance of the recognition in the local Chinese community would come at the expense of the Hong Men Society's authority and its non-partisan support for the ROC. In its evolution from a conspiratorial, mutual-aid fraternity to a populist, semi-political organization, the Hong Men Society had intertwined its historical and cultural myths with the nationalist narrative of the ROC. Hence, it and the Chinese Times had difficulty in accepting the PRC-Canada ties. The newspaper supported Ottawa's decision only because it assumed that the overseas Chinese were ultimately guests or exiles in Canada.

The controversies surrounding the recognition and identity discourse moreover showed the underlying interests of the competing factions in Vancouver's Chinatown. The debates related to Nationalist-Communist rivalry and authentic Chinese culture were also debates about who had the authority to represent the Chinese in Canada. The debates then turned into a high stake contest for power among individuals and groups within the local Chinese community. Major community-wide ethnic organizations, such as the CBA and the Hong Men Society/Chinese Freemasons, were the battlegrounds for the competing factions.

The Chinatown News, for instance, connected the PRC-China ties with the emerging reform movement in the CBA. Its editorials argued against the pro-KMT stance by the umbrella association because this position destroyed the CBA's broad base support and diverted it from addressing the needs of the Chinatown. Furthermore, the Chinatown News, which sided with local-born representatives, pushed for reforms for the CBA and the community in the wake of recognition.

These reforms included making the traditional associations more democratic and opening up the community to mainstream Canadian society. The Chinese-Canadian agenda expected community leaders to abandon the Old World style of politics and engage in contemporary Canadian politics. They should participate in grassroots activities, elections, and meaningful dialogue about multiculturalism.

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The Chinese Times viewed the recognition controversy and the associated newspaper war as a struggle against the extreme “left” and “right” elements that threatened to tear apart the Hong Men Society on a national level. The newspaper thus directed its polemics at the alleged renegade members and chapters of the organization. Immediately before and after the Sino-Canadian Communiqué, the Hong Men Society underwent infighting over leadership, regulations, and branch autonomy. The newspaper also believed that the recognition was threatening the domestic harmony of the overseas Chinese community. Therefore, the Chinese Times’ opinions during this entire affair involved not only Chinese politics but also local power struggles.

The recognition controversy moreover showed a new kind of leadership in the Vancouver Chinese community in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The editorial and articles in the Chinatown News indicated that the elderly, conservative leaders, who came from the traditional ethnic organizations, local KMT party, and merchant class, were now being challenged by their descendents, who came from professional, business, and academic

⁴⁵⁴ Again see Chinatown News, 3 May 1972, pp. 3, 62. Also see Chinatown News, 18 March 1972, pp. 3, 56.

backgrounds. The challengers were socially mobile and had cultivated networks that extended beyond the ethnic boundary. Their perspective extended beyond organizational and Chinese politics. The challengers, who were mainly Canadian-born and young immigrants, thus felt that they had more to contribute to their community than the semi-retiring and oppressive patriarchs in the traditional ethnic organizations did.⁴⁵⁵ Roy Mah contended that the CBA's inflexible and inward-looking response to the recognition of the PRC was a clear sign for the need of a change in leadership. The Canadian-born group would slowly undermine the political and cultural dominance of the KMT backers throughout the 1970s.

Though the composition and outlook of the leaders were changing, their relationship with the ancestral country remained mostly unchanged. The professionals and business people in the local Chinese community supported or accepted the PRC-Canada ties because they wanted to take advantage of new trade and career opportunities.⁴⁵⁶ Having an amicable relationship with PRC officials would give the non-partisan Canadian-born Chinese elites more authority in their community. They became the intermediaries not only for the Chinese-Canadian community but also for China as well. Hence, the Chinatown News promoted recognition as an event that would create many cultural and economic benefits for not only the Chinese-Canadians but also for the rest of Canada. Recognition overall had encouraged Canadian-born Chinese to consciously

⁴⁵⁵ Ng, pp. 29-31.

⁴⁵⁶ Wickberg, "Overseas Chinese Adaptive Organizations," p. 79. Also see Chinatown News, 18 June 1971, p. 51.

develop and use their ethnic resource, though they remained apathetic to homeland politics.

Conversely, Canada's recognition of the PRC harmed the older generation of immigrants who supported the KMT and ROC. Their social capital inside and outside the local Chinese community came from their cooperation with the ROC government, which was no longer the official Chinese government. The hegemony and unity that the Chinatown elders had cultivated through the National Salvation campaigns was lost after 1970. The elders' symbolic rejection of the PRC was therefore a feeble attempt to protect their interests and prestige.

Hence, the Chinatown News and Chinese Times often referred to the backgrounds of their readers or constituents when they were debating about homeland and community politics. The former publication sought to represent those who strove to acculturate and integrate themselves into liberal, postwar Canadian society. The latter publication sought to speak for the original, prewar immigrants from South China in addition to the new arrivals who shared their sojourner and Old World values. The recognition debate showed just how far apart the readers of the respective presses were. The two sides not only disagreed on contemporary issues affecting them or China, but also had distinct historical narratives. The Chinese Times and Hong Men Society believed that the Chinese immigrants were instrumental in the building of the Chinese nation. Conversely, the Chinatown News believed that the immigrants were builders of the Canadian nation, which had long excluded them.

Though this entire affair showed that no single type of organization, group or leadership could represent Canada's Chinese population, consensus in the ethnic community was still possible. Despite their contrary opinions, the Chinatown News and Chinese Times did whatever they could to restore unity and harmony in the Vancouver Chinese community after the recognition. The latter publication was willing to moderate its stance after meting out and receiving venomous attacks from its critics. Reporters and commentators for both presses moreover had a similar hope, which was a united and democratic China. Roy Mah's generation had not abandoned the belief held by their immigrant parents and grandparents that China was undergoing a cyclical process of division and unification, but the country and nation remained ultimately indivisible.⁴⁵⁷ A Chinese Times commentator also succinctly summarized this view with the often used Chinese cliché: "When [the realm] under the Heaven has been divided long enough it must be united [again], and vice versa." (天下分久必合, 和久必分). However, the commentator also feared that this truism no longer applied to the contemporary world as China faced pressures from foreign powers.⁴⁵⁸

Lastly, the ethnic media's coverage of the recognition controversy provided a glimpse of the development of Chinese nationalism abroad. The Chinese Times particularly expressed a kind of populist, overseas Chinese nationalism that had grown steadily since the late 1800s and peaked in the

⁴⁵⁷ Reporter Lincoln Mar made this kind comment in his article on the reaction of the Chinese community to the recognition. See Chinatown News, 18 November 1970, pp. 48-49. Also see Chinatown News, 18 June 1971, p. 49.

⁴⁵⁸ Chinese Times, 17 December 1970, 3.

1940s and 1950s. Its editorials and articles during the newspaper war were colorful and invaluable narratives about one of the oldest overseas Chinese organizations. The Hong Men Society in Canada had first achieved community solidarity among the migrants, and this community solidarity later evolved into an ethnic and national solidarity. The Chinese civil war and Cold War had interrupted the process of imagining and constructing the Chinese nation, and neither the KMT-CBA alliance nor the Hong Men Society could stop the gradual decline of the overseas Chinese nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s. Ironically, the KMT supporters had made homeland politics distasteful to those they sought to recruit.

The normalization of the ties between Canada and the PRC provided the opening for the Canadian-born generation to shift the control of the ethnic discourse to their side. Nonetheless, the project's examination of the Chinese Times' coverage finds nationalist discourse can occur at an international/transnational level. Similar to Timothy Stanley's analysis of the Chinese merchants' political activism in the late 19th century, this project disagrees with the view that distinct national histories are grounded within specific political and geographical boundaries.⁴⁵⁹

The commentaries of the Chinese Times during the recognition debate still showed that the main component of the *huaqiao* identity was the nationalist ideology, which supposed to unite Chinese immigrants of all backgrounds and tie them into a history of struggle for the liberation and advancement of the

⁴⁵⁹ Stanley, pp. 478-479, 502-503.

homeland.⁴⁶⁰ Hence, what took place in the Vancouver Chinese community in 1970 was one of many facets of national or ethnic identity politics.

⁴⁶⁰ Wang, China and the Chinese Overseas, pp. 7-8.

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